INDIA

AS DESCRIBED BY

Early Greek Writers

"I have found it a very systematic, rational and accurate treatment of the accounts left by those Greek Writers where facts are mingled with fiction Mr. Puri has treated the subject in a scientific manner by discriminating the true from the untrue."

D. R. BHANDARKAR

BAIJ NATH PURI,
M.A., B.A. (Hons.

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PREFACE

The present book is the revised edition of my thesis on 'India as described by Early Greek Writers' which was presented for the Master of Arts degree of the Lucknow University in 1937. The favourable opinion that I received from eminent historians, like Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, Dewan S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar Bahadur, and others, was an encouragement to me and was the chief reason for its publication. The book is written with a rational purpose, and mainly to avoid the widespread prevailing belief that the accounts of the Greek historians were fabulous and mendacious. Every attempt has been made to justify as much as is possible; for 'there is a grain of truth in every lie.' The treatment is made topic-wise with a view to make it clear on the popular mind as to how far the various aspects of Indian culture and civilisation could create an impression on the Greek historians who cared to visit India, and also on those historians who were dependent on some second-hand source. The conclusions arrived at, are mainly based on the accounts of these Greek historians and corroborated by Indian evidences.

I am very thankful to R. B. Surendra Nath Ghosh Retd. Secretary Legislative Council who has encouraged me to publish this book. For the plates, I am thankful to the archæological department.

The system of transliteration is avoided.

Lucknow, January, 1939. BAIJ NATH PURI.

SOME OF THE OPINIONS.

Mr. G. M. Harper I.C.S. Commissioner Lucknow Division.

"Though Mr. Puri has been handicapped by a lack of knowledge of Greek, he has undoubtedly shown great industry in his researches into a very interesting topic."

Dr. Nirmal Chand Banerjee M.A., B.L., Ph. D., Calcutta University.

"It gives me great pleasure to state that I have carefully gone through 'India as described by Early Greek Writers' by Mr. Baij Nath Puri M. A., Research Scholar, Lucknow University. Though it is the first literary effort of a young man, the book is interesting and well written. Mr. Puri has handled the materials available from the Greek Writers very carefully and the book shows industry and critical judgment. I hope that his other literary efforts will be well received by historians and scholars who work in the field of Indian Archæology. He deserves encouragement by being appointed a lecturer in some of our Indian Universities."

Jitendra Nath Banerjee Esq. M.A., Calcutta University.

"Mr. Baij Nath Puri' M. A , has brought out a neat brochure on a very fascinating subject *viz.*, 'India as descirbed by Early Greek Writers.' This was the subject of his thesis submitted by him in lieu of the essay paper in Ancient Indian History when he sat for his M.A. degree in the Lucknow University. He has very assiduously collected in this work all the available materials about the subject and has arranged them in a very satisfactorily manner. He is critical in his method and he has a great capacity for research work. This work of his will be of great help to students and researchers in this line."

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ABBREVIATIONS.

Anc. Geo.	...	Cunningham's, "Ancient Geography of India" 1871 Edition.
Aelian	...	Aelian's "Natural History."
Arch. Su-Re.	...	Archæological Survey Report.
Arrian	...	Arrian's "Anabasis."
C. A. H.	...	Cambridge Ancient History Vol. IV
C. H. I	...	Cambridge History of India Vol. I.
E. H. I.	...	Smith's, "Early History of India."
Frag	...	Fragment.
G. O. D. L.	...	Grammar of Dravidian Language.
Hero	...	Herodotus' "Historica."
Kautilya	...	Kautilya's "Arthasastra."
Manu	...	Manusmriti.
M. H C.	...	R. Mookerjee's "Hindu Civilisation."
M. L. C.A.I.	...	R. Mookerjee's, "Local Government in Ancient India."
M.c.A. I.C L.	...	McCrindle's "Ancient India in classical literature."
M.c.I. O.L.C.	...	McCrindle's "Invasion of Alexander the Great."
P. E.	...	Pillar Edict.
Pliny	...	Pliny's "Natural History."
R.C. A.I.	...	H. C. Ray Chaudhari's "Political History of Ancient India" 3rd Edition.
R. E.	...	Rock Edict;
Strabo	...	Strabos "Geography."
Vinaya	...	Vinaya Pitaka.
V. S. S.	...	Yajurveda-Vajana Sanehi Samhita.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

The ancient Greeks till a very late period of their history possessed little or no real knowledge about India. They had nebulous conceptions, which were vague, loose, uncertain and mysterious. Though trade and commerce had brought them together,[1] yet India to them was regarded as an Eastern Ethiopia[2] inhabited by a race of men scorched

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1. According to Dr. Sayce (Hibbert Lectures 'Origin and Growth of Religions among the Babylonians') the commerce by sea between India and Babylon must have been carried on as early as about 3000 B.C. This is not accepted by the scholars. According to Mr. Kennedy (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 1898. "Early commerce between India and Babylon") "no archaelogical literary evidence to a maritime trade between India and Babylon prior to the 7th century B.C. can be found but for the 6th century B. C. direct evidence is forthcoming."

2. Homer 'Odessy' I 23-24. "The Ethiopians who are divided into two and live at the world's end—one part of them towards the setting sun and the other towards the rising."

black by the fierce rays of the sun. They used articles of Indian merchandise such as 'Kassiteros' Sanskrit "(Kastir)" tin and 'elephas' (Sanskrit 'elpha') ivory[1] but the Greek conception about their source was vague and obscure, nay it was 'obscurum per obscurius.' In Greek literature, even there are references to strange races[2] of men and animals sometimes referring to India and often to adjacent countries of which they had little knowledge mainly acquired through some second hand source.

But this nebulous conception could not be modified through the aid of successive expeditions undertaken by the Egyptians under Sesostris,[3] the Assyrians under Semiramis,

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1. Dr. R. K. Mookerji's 'Indian Shipping' pp. 92.

2. "They have been referred to as 'skiapodes' people who used their enormous feet as sunshades, 'Otoliknoi' or 'Enotokoitoi' who wrapped themselves in their ears" (Cambridge History of India Vol. I pp. 394-5).

3. "The Greek name of the Greatest of the Early Kings of Egypt. Disdorous calls him Sysoosis and he is identified by some with Osistason I and by others with Setlos or Ramses II whose reign according to Wilkinson lasted from 1311 to 1245 B.C. As he ascended the throne he assembled an army of 600,000 foot, 24.000 horse, 27.000 war chariots and a fleet of 1,000 ships to conquer the world" (American Cyclopedia Vol. XIV, p. 521).

and the Persians first under Cyrus[1] and then under Darius I[2] because of a spirit of gasconade and bravedo which they exhibited for their valour and enterprise. They went more as conquerors than as historians. This fact is also supplemented by the vast distance between India and Greece which was a barrier to free intercourse. It was not till the sixth century B.C. when the Semitic and other kingdoms of nearer Asia disappeared before the vast Persian Empire with Greece on one border and India on the other, when tributes

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1. "The acount of Nearchus, as preserved by Arrian (Anabasis VI, 24.2.3) links the name of Cyrus and of Semiramis, the far famed Assyrian Queen and states that Alexander, when planning his march through Gedrosia (Beluchistan) was told by the inhabitants that no one had ever before escaped with an army by this route excepting Semiramis on her flight from India. And she, they said escaped with only twenty of her army and Cyrus the son of Cambysus in his turn with only seven" (C.H. I, Vol. I, p. 331).

2. "Darius I, utilising the information collected by Scylax was enabled to annex the Indus valley and to send his fleets into the Indian ocean. The conquered provinces were formed into a separate satrapy, the twentieth which was considered the richest and most populous province of the Empire" (Smith's Early History of India p. 40).

from India and Ionia went into the same treasury and when Greek and Indian contin gents served under the same sovereign that a wider and definite conception about India could be achieved through this association and affiliation of the two races under the same flag.

The first Greek historian who has mentioned about India was Scylax of Caryanda. He was employed by King Darius and according to Herodotus (IV 44) was sent by the Emperor to explore the Indus region. The expedition started from Kaspapyros[1] down to the sea. His narrative which dealt with the expedition does not give any real account of India but it gave a little geographical idea of the Indus valley not only to the Persians but also to the later Greek historians who cared to consult him.

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1. "This was the Indus valley in the neighbourhood of the confluence of the Kabul river, more or less the Peshawar District. Hecataeus mentions this place as a city of the Gandharian. Pactyice or the Pactyous land was the upper portion of the Kabul valley or more generally the territory in which Pukhtu (Pashtu) was spoken" (Dr Schoff—'Periphus of the Erythrean Sea' p. 42).

Hecataeus of Miletus[1] (B.C. 549-486) who published his 'Geography' before 500 B.C., also gave a vague picture of North-west India, basing his knowledge on the 'Narrative of Scylax' and the accounts of the Persians with whom he came into contact during his travels. His vision, as was natural could not extend beyond the limit of the Persian empire which was fixed at the river Indus. He has mentioned a few correct names like 'Kaspapyros' (Sanskrit 'Kashyapapur') referring to the people of Gandhar and the river Indus. His mention of Indian tribes like Opiai and Kalatiai, do not refer to any tribe of the Indus valley.

The first Greek historian who gave some substantial account about India was Herodotus of Halikarnassos who was born in 484 B.C. and died in 431 B.C. His importance lay in his monumental work the 'Historica'

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1. Hecataeus—the Greek historian and Geographer was born in 550 B.C. and died in 476 B.C. He travelled in various provinces of the Persian Empire and was sent as a satrap to the Great King Darius I to solicit money for the vanquished. He was the author of the famous 'Geography' and a historical work. Some fragments of his work were published by R. H. Klansenart, Berlin in 1831.

which possesses the features of a universal history, for focusing and bringing into a narrative the histories of various nations with in agiven a period. His account of India being mainly preserved (in Books III 97-106, IV. 44, VII, 65, 86) though falls short of the standard, taken in the light of the vast space devoted to the histories of other nations, still it speaks much for his critical capacity and diligent enquiry. Being dependent on second hand sources which he honestly believed to be true, he based his knowledge about India on purely oral evidences and current beliefs. His work though earliest is still in its fully preserved form. The term 'Father of History' commonly applied to him is of no small insignificance in relation to the circumstances under which his work was done. The work itself implied a genius in that it introduced into the educative world a new form of literature of which previous examples can never be said to have existed

Ktesias[1] the next Greek writer, who was physician and Historian at the Court of the

1. Ktesias was also the author of the 'History of Persia. in 23 books which he wrote when at the Persian court. Both the works 'Persika' and 'Indika' are lost but

Persian Emperor Artaxerxes Mnemon, and a contemporary of Xenophon, has the credit of being the first Greek writer to write directly about India which was an obscure land to the Greeks. As the Court physicians to the Persian Emperor from about the year 416 B.C.-398 B.C., he had the best opportunity of acquiring knowledge about India through Persian officials who visited India, but he had also ample facilities of coming into contact with those Indians who visited the Persian Court. This is testified by his own account of having seen Indians, two women and five men, who were white in colour and attended the Persian Court (Bibli LXXII Frag.I) either as merchants or as envoys bringing presents and tributes from the rulers of North-West India which in former times was subject to the Persian Emperor (Hero. IV.44.) Though he has been accused of medacity and falsifica-

their fragments are to be found in later writings. We are indebted to Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople in the time of Emperor Michael III in the 9th century A.D. for preserving some fragments of 'Indika' in his work 'Bibliotheca.' It has been translated into English and published by Mr. J. W. McCrindle in 'Indian Antiquary' Vol. X 1882.

tion for making his accounts a tissue of fables of absurd perversions and exaggerations of truth but the evolution in our knowledge of Ancient India has led us to believe that they were not Ktesias' own inventions or creations but current beliefs of the time which he failed to avoid. On this score though he has been acquitted of mendacity and falsification but that did not mean he was always immune from that charge; in most cases his falsification and corruption of truth were due to his desire of maintaining current stories in his work as relating to the Indians.[1]

The invasion of Alexander the Great, was the means to an end; the end being the knowledge about that sequestered and isolated part of the world very near the sun, Though Herodotus and Ktesias had given accounts of India, but the accounts were more or less absurd and exaggerations of truth and it was

1. These fabulous tales were in connection with those non-Aryans, who presented a strange appearance to the Aryans. In Riga Veda (VII 21-52; x. 99-3) their characteristics as 'anasa' (snubnosed), 'maridh' Vak (hostile in speech), adeyu (non-worshippers of Vedic gods), akarman' (devoid of Vedic ritual) are mentioned. Even Ktesias (Frag 11) mentioned the pygmies as 'snub nosed.'

difficult to find out the true from the untrue, the real from the false and the genuine from the spurious. The knowledge about India would not have advanced even by an iota beyond Ktesias, had the invasion not taken place.

This fact is testified by the diversity between the account given in the 'Indika of Ktesias and that in Megasthenes. It was not a step but a big jump from fables and absurd tales to true and genuine accounts. It would just show how the entire true knowledge about India was due to that event.

But Alexander's invasion would have remained a mystery had the accounts not been preserved in the works of the historians who accompanied him. Though their works are lost but some fragments of their accounts are still to be found in later writings especially those of Strabo, Pliny and Arrian. The important personages among Alexander's historians were Aristobolus, a native of Kassandreia, Nearchus of Crete and Onesikritus from the Greek Island of Aegina. Aristobolus' 'History of the War' was one of

the principal sources used by Arrian in the composition of his 'Anabasis' and by Plutarch in his 'Life of Alexander'. Nearchus accompained Alexander as 'Admiral of the Fleet'. The fragments of his memoirs are preserved in the works of Strabo and Arrian. Onesikritus was the 'Pilot of the Fleet'. His 'Life of Alexander' though under valued because of facts being intermingled with fictious, nevertheless gave much information and at places imparted originality to the later historians who cared to preserve his accounts in their writings.

The historians have spoken with frankness and veracity. Their accounts are mostly true and unlike their predecessors they took interest in depicting the true account of India and her culture. This they did with a view to make their countrymen understand the position of India and her culture in the world. In this pursuit the doors of India and her institutions were opened to them. They found what they sought. Though their stay did not last long but they certainly utilised the opportunity however small it was in gaining an insight into Indian culture and civilization. Their outlook might have been

even more advanced but as their works are lost and we are dependent on later historians who gave only a partial account, their estimates are not of much value.

Megasthenes and Deimachus were the two great historians who were sent from the Syrian Court as ambassadors to the Imperial Court at Pataliputra. Megasthenes was sent in the time of King Chandra Gupta (321-298 B. C.) while Deimachus in the time of his son King Bimbisara (Arrian V. 6-2). They were the first Greek historians who had the privilege of going into the interior of the country and residing at the Imperial Court for a certain period of time during which they tried much to learn about Indian culture and civilisation and also about India, taken as a geographical entity. They were the first to communicate to the world wider conceptions on many important topics like India and its boundary, its configuration, physical features, polity, society, economic life etc., and many other subjects concerning the people. The account of Megasthenes popularly known as the Indika is lost but some of its fragments are to be found in the writings of later historians especially those

of Strabo and Arrian. The fragments were first collected by Dr. E. A. Schwanbeck and published in 1846 at Bonn, the English translation of which was done by Mr. J. W. Mc Crindle in 1891. Nothing is known about Deimachus' work except that he greatly exaggerated the dimensions of the country (Strabo xv, 1,12) and was singled out by Strabo as the most mendacious of all the writers on India. (xv. 1,10).

The account of Megasthenes has been under-valued by the later Greek historians. Schwanbeck (p. 59) wrote to this effect: "The ancient writers whenever they judge of those who have written on Indian matters are without doubt wont to reckon Megasthenes among those writers whe are given to lying and least worthy of credit, and to rank him almost on a par with Ktesias". He also referred to (p. 70) Strabo charging Megasthenes for untrue and spurious accounts. "Generally speaking," he said, "the men who have written on the affairs of India were a set of liars. Deimachus holds the first place in the list, Megasthenes comes next, while Onesikritus and Nearchus, with others of the same class manage to stammer out a few

words (of truth). Of this we became the more convinced whilst writing the history of Alexander. No faith whatever can be placed in Deimachus and Megasthenes. They coined the fables concerning men with ears large enough to sleep in, men without any mouths, without noses, with one eye, with spiders leg and with fingers bent backward."

Even Pliny (Natural History VI-XXI. 3) has accused Megasthenes of mendacity and unreliability. He said, "India was opened up to our knowledge......even by other Greek writers, who having resided with Indian kings-as for instance Megasthenes and Dionysius made known the strength of the races which peopled the country. It is not, however worth while to study their accounts with care, so conflicting as they are and incredible."

But the fun lies in the fact that despite the charge the later historians have levied against Megasthenes, the same writers filled their pages at greater length with the contents of his 'Indika.' It is not, that the entire acconnt of Megasthenes was filled with false details, but his fault lay in giving an account

of the fabulous races and the invasion of Herakles and Dionysius (Stabo XV 1-6-7) for which he was not responsible as he depicted what he heard from the Brahmins with whom he came in contact during his stay at the Imperial Court. This indigenous origin is asserted by Schwanbeck (p. 74) who examining the fables said, "The relative veracity of Magasthenes then cannot be questioned for he related truthfully both what he actually saw and what was told him by others. If we therefore seek to know what reliance is to be placed on any particular narrative, this other point must be considered, how far his informants were worthy of credit. But here no ground for suspicion exists; for on those matters which did not come under his own observation he had his information from those Brahmins who were the rulers of the state, to whom he again and again appeals as his authorities" Therefore it is no wonder if we find these fabulous races of men and gods in Greek garb though they were indigenous in character.

Megasthenes has described India in all aspects but the fact that he did not touch linguistic and religious aspects at greater

length was no fault of his nor did he omit to mention these aspects. Since the later historians have preserved only a few fragments, it is just possible that they omitted his accounts concerning these matters. His work though lost but still the fragments speak of the knowledge which attained close and perfect accuracy in the time of later historians who copied his accounts. The writers who found fault with him borrowed a good deal from his work. In his work "he has recalled a picture of the condition of India at a definite period, a service of all the greater value because Indian literature, always self consistent is wont to leave us in the greatest doubt if we seek to know what happened at any particular time." (Schwanbeck pp. 28-29).

Patrokles was the next Greek writer after Megasthenes. He had held an important government office over some of the eastern provinces of the Syrian Empire under Seleukos Nikator and Antiochus I (B. C. 281-261). He wrote a work on Eastern Geography which included a general description of India and was held in high esteem especially by Strabo. He did not add much

to our knowlege save some stray geographical notices. Patrokles was often cited by Strabo for his truthfulness (Book II, 6). The information contained in his work was held high in esteem and much used by Erasthones (B.C. 276-194 C), the president (240-196 B. C.) of the Alexandrian library, and the first man to raise Geography to the rank of a science, by collecting its facts hitherto scattered and disjointed and arranging them in a system framed on scientific principles.

The history of Polybius written about 144 B. C. contained valuable information about India and its connection with the Syrian Empire. His entire account is lost but only one note is preserved by Mr. J. W. McCrindle in "India as described in classical literature." This note deals with Antiochus the Great, meeting Demetrius son of Euthydemos for a peace treaty thus ending the wars between the two fighting powers, the Syrians and the Bactrians. After the peace treaty as the note mentions Antiochus the Great Syrian monarch met Sophagasenus (Skt 'Subhagasena') the king of India. Thus this note throws sufficient light on the political condition of Northern India in the 3rd century

B. C., when Asoka held imperial Sway over India. In fact Asoka has mentioned him as his contemporary (R. E. III & XIII).

The next Greek writer after Polybius was Artemidorous of Ephesus, a Greak traveller and Geographer very frequently quoted by Strabo. He was a native of Ephesus and lived about 100 B. C. His work on Geography was called "Periplus of the External sea both Eastern and Western and of the largest islands in it." It is a lost work but its abridgement was made by Marcianus early in the fifth century. Dr. Wilfred H. Schoff of Philadelphia, has translated it. His learned article on 'The name of the Erythraen Sea' was published in the journal of the American Oriental Society Volume XXXIII part IV. 1913. It gave a few Geograpical notices about India which were preserved by Strabo.

There was no other Greek writer before the Christian era who has written amply about India. This was due to the fact that the north-west India and beyond after Megasthenes' time was the centre of political revolutions bringing about the establishment

of one kingdom and the demolition of another which failed to offer opportunities of close study to the Greek writers who cared to write about India. "The revolt of Parthia took place almost simultaneously with the revolt of Bactria, although probably a year or two later" (C. H. I. P. 439). The explanation lies on the surface. "Antiochus II (261-246 B. C.) like his two immediate successors, Seleukos II (246 226 B. C.) and Seleukos III (226-223 B. C.) was too much occupied with wars" (C. H. I. P. 435). The later period was occupied mainly with Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian settlements in the North-west Frontier and beyond, full account of which is preserved in Cambridge History of India Volume I chapters XVIII and XXII. Thus Megasthenes may be taken as the last Greek historian before the Christian era who has given a vivid account of India, those who followed him did not even come to India and were thus unreliable.

The Christian era opened with a great historian Strabo whose 'Geography' is the most important and comprehensive work on that science which came down from a long time. He was a native of Amasia and though

his dates of birth and death are uncertain, he lived in the reign of Augustus and was living in the time of Tiberius in 21 A. D. As a great traveller his descriptions embody the results of his personal observations. His fame lay not in attributting criticism to the writings of previous Greek historians but in his own 'Geography' which surpassed all such writings of antiquity both in grandeur and conception. Its scope was confined not merely to the physical or commercial Geography alone, but it was a wider one embracing many topics of social, economic and political nature. The author himself called it a collosal work meant for such as took a prominent part in public affairs. It distinguished itself from Ptolemy's 'Geography' (which was not a Greek contribution) in its containing all matters of public information while the latter was meant for a 'chartographer' and contained little beyond dry and long lists of names with latitudes and longitudes.

Pliny's great historical contribution, 'The Natural History' is more or less an encyclopedia of the ancient people. Its references, some of which are of extraordinary value, are

not to be found elsewhere. Pliny the elder, distinguished from his nephew Pliny the younger, belonged to the first century A. D., and gave to the world his contribution in 77 A. D. though he did not survive long to see its publication. His work though does not show much of originality, nevertheless indicates his vast study, and there was not one book which he did not read. His work was divided in 37 books. The sixth one dealing with India was based mainly on the "Indika" of Megasthenes.

Arrian, a Greeco-Roman official of the second century after Christ gave a very good account of India as well as a critical history of the 'Invasion of Alexander the great.' These works are based mostly on the writings of Alexander's historians and Magasthenes and Deimachus—the two Syrian Ambassadors at the Mauryan Court. Arrian, a genius as he was, showed his talents to Emperor Antonius Pious who raised him to consulship. He died at an advanced age. His work on India popularly known as 'Indika' consisted of three parts—the first giving a general description of India based chiefly on the accounts of Megasthenes (Chapters I-XVII), the second

containing an account of the voyage of Nearchus, the Cretan, and based entirely on the narrative written by Nearchus himself (Chapters XVII-XLIII), while the third was a collection to show that the southern parts of the world were uninhabitable on account of the great heat (Chapters XLIII to the end).

Aelian flourished in the middle of the second century A. D. His two works 'A collection of Miscellaneous History' and 'on the Peculiarity of Animals' are important for our purposes. The first was a regular contribution while the second though a work of zoology, is important for throwing light on the fauna of ancient India. In his 'Collections of History', Books III, IV, XIII, XV and XVI mention something about ancient History and culture. They are not original contributions but taken from the writings of previous historians. He unlike Strabo, did not mention their names and it is only the subject matter and the language which makes it associated with some previous historian.

The 'philosophical romance' composed in honour of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratos the Athenian about 215-18 A. D at the request

of the Empress Julia Somna, professes to give minute and interesting details of the observatoins made by the hero of the work during the course of his travels through north-west India, which according to Professor Petric (E.H.I. p. 13) took place in the cold season of A. D. 43-4. The excavations at Taxila have corroborated the truth of his statements concerning some of the monuments at Taxila. The work is translated by Carybeare.

Besides these there are many other Greek historians who flourished later. Since they are not Early Greek historians (the subject of the theme) they are not included for consideration and treatment. The notable among them were Julius Valerius, an Alexandrian writer of the fourth century A. D. who claimed authorship of "The Itinerary of Alexander the Great", Kosmas Indiko-pleustes the author of "Christian Topography", a work which appeared in the sixth century A. D.

CHAPTER II

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACK-GROUND*

The geographical background has differed according to the evolution in Greek knowledge about India. There were no two historians whose visions were identical. Scylax, Hecataeus Herodotus, and Ktesias were content only with the region upto the river Indus which formed the boundary line of the Persian Empire. Alexander's historians no doubt crossed the river Indus and traversed the entire region of the Punjab and Sindh but since their expedition, as Arrian has pointed out, was restricted by the river Beas (Frag. IV) their vision could not extend beyond that region. Megasthenes, having resided at the Mauryan Court for a number of years, had his vision confined to the whole of Northern India. Strabo besides covering Megasthenes' geographical background

*Geographie and Chronologie are the sunne and the moone, the right and left eye of all history (Dr. Mookerji's 'Hindu Civilisation' p. 40)

Association with Geography was a characteristic of the Early literature of the Greeks (J. W. Bury, 'Ancient Greek Historians' p. 40).

tried to mention places of the south like 'Pandion' (XV. 1. 4) or what is known as the Pandya country but much account of southern India was given by Pliny who besides mentioning places like Kalinga [VI. Chap. 17 (21)] and Andhra [VI Chap. 17-(22)] also gave a full and vivid account of Tabropane or Ceylon [VI Chap. 22 (24)]. Though this place was also mentioned by Onesikritus and Megasthenes whom Pliny mentioned in his account, but his account is vivid, clear and full of details. Thus it may safely be asserted that the Geographical background expanded with the expansion in the Greek knowledge about India.

Country:—The first notice, in a geographical account is the description of the country and its people. Herodotus the first Greek historian in two passages (III. 98 & IV. 40) referred to the Indians as the most remote nation on the east beyond whom was the desert. This conception was based on the extent of the territory of the Persian Emperor Darius I which was fixed at the river Indus [IV. 44 (Hero)]. His territory comprised North-west Frontier, Punjab and Sindh which according to the Persepolitan Inscription, formed the twentieth satrapy.

Ktesias considered India to be a country on the east beyond which was the desert (Frag. I). He tried to supercede Herodotus by adding that India was not smaller than the rest of Asia (Frag. I) which is a gross exaggeration. The account of Herodotus and Ktesias concerning the Geographical aspect shows that they had absolutely no idea of the region beyond Indus. As the Persian territory was confined only upto the river Indus, they thought that since the territory of Darius I did not extend beyond Indus, the region must be barren and infertile and not worthy of attracting Persian attention. Alexander's historians though they had only Punjab and Sindh as their geographical background, tried to guess the dimension of the country. Onesikritus (Strabo XV.1. 12) declared that India was a third part of the habitable world, while Neanchus pointed out that it took four months to traverse the plains to the Eastern ocean. The latter one may be taken as correct since in those days it must have taken that much time to traverse the land. Megasthenes, who was the first historian to go into the interior of the country described the position of India as quadrilateral—its eastern and western sides bounded by sea but

on the northern side divided by mount Hemodos* from that portion or Skythia which was inhabited by those Scythians called the Sakai, while the fourth or western side was bounded by the river called Indus which was the largest of the rivers except the Nile (Frag. I, Didorus II 35-42). This position of India is also confirmed by Erasthones who mentioned India bounded, on the north by Kaukasos (its several parts being Paropanisos, Emodos and Imasos), on the west by the river Indus; on the south and west, which sides were much greater than others, it projected into the Atlantic Ocean. It had the Shape of a rhomboid (Strabo XV. 1. 11). The dimensions were also mentioned both by Megasthenes and Erasthones and a little later by Patrokles (Strabo XV.1.11) but they were mere guess works, for which they had no credit. Though the modern scholars have tried to prove that the dimensions as mentioned by Megasthenes, Erasthones and

*_Hemodos_:—or Emodos generally designated that part of the Himalayan range which extended along Nepal and Bhutan and onwards towards east. Arrian (IV. 2) has cleared that the range bears different names in the various countries which it traverses. At one place it is called Paropamesos, at another Emodos and a third Imass and it has perhaps other names besides these.

Patiokles were partially correct, yet it seems strange how a mere guess can be taken as certainty. The dimensions varied at great length. Megasthenes called it a quadrilateral whose sides must differ in size but made two sides equal in length, while Erasthones called it a rhomboid whose sides differed from the other by 3000 stadia (Strabo XV. 1. 11) which shows the conflicting nature of their own statements. It may be possible that they were ignorant of geometrical terms but still their accounts regarding the dimensions must not be taken as ideals which may somehow or the other approximate the truth.

Strabo and Pliny also mentioned the boundaries of India. Strabo asserted that the Indians occupied in part some of the countries situated along the Indus which formerly belonged to the Persians. Alexander deprived the Ariani of them, and established there settlements of his own. But Seleukos Nikator gave them to Sandrokottus in consequence of a marriage contract (XV. 2, 9). By this it must not be supposed that his account of India was confined only to the portion along the Indus. This is only a partial account of only that part of India which was

ceded to Chandra Gupta by Seleukos. His description of Pataliputra (XV. 1,36) and of the places of the south (XV. 1,4) are sufficient evidence of his knowing much about India. Pliny said "most writers did not fix the Indus as the western boundary (of India), but add to it the four satrapies of Gedrosia, Arachotae, Aria and Paropamisadae-thus making the river Cophes its extreme boundary" (VI. 23). Strabo (XV. 1,18) had also stated that at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Indus was the boundary of India.

But it was a great credit for these writers to bring to light that part of India which though physically severed from India. is connected with India, in the cultural sphere. popularly known as Ceylon. Onesikritus (Strabo XV. 1-15) mentioned Tabropane with a magnitude of 5,000 skadia without distinction of length or breadth. Megasthenes referred it as being divided by a river [Frag. XVIII] Erasthones (Strabo XV. 1,14) tried to give its dimensions which are much exaggerated. Pliny [VI. 22 (24)] mentioned its trade intercourse with Rome under Emperor Claudius. The dimensions which he mentioned were also exaggera-

tions. Thus though these historians could not know the real dimensions of the island as was also the case with India but they knew well that there was an island to the south which though physically severed from India, but still had cultural intercourse with this country and had commercial relations not with India alone but also with the west. The ancient name of the island was 'Parasamudra' (I. A. 1919 p. 195-96), while according to a tradition recorded in the Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa when the first Aryan immigrants under Prince Vijai Singh reached that island, the prince rested for some time supporting himself on the palm of his hand which became copper coloured, hence he named it 'Tambraparni.' (I. H. Q. II 1, p. 1 ff). Even in Asokan inscriptions (R. E. II & XIII) there is a mention of this island ('a TambaPamni' Girnar version). Thus it was nothing very strange if the Greeks could know about Ceylon as connected with India, when there are much earlier references testifying its relation with India.

Rivers—The whole of India was watered by its rivers (Strabo XV. 1-13). The earliest ones-namely Scylax, Hekataens and Herodotus

knew only about the river Indus. Scylax and Hekataeus mentioned it in connection with the territory of Darius I which extended as far as that river, while Herodotus (III. 98) referred to 'the river' in connection with some people who inhabited the marshes of the river. The very mention of 'the' denotes that it was the only river known to him and it can be nothing else but Indus. Ktesias tried to be lucid by mentioning the breadth of this river which he assumed smallest at forty and largest at 100 stadia (Arrian Frag. 4), though the actual breadth seems to be a midway between the two. He mentioned it flowing through the mountains and the plains (Frag 16) Ktesias also referred to a river Hypobarus, 'the bearer of all good things' which flowed from the north to the eastern ocean near a mountain well wooded with trees that produced amber (Pliny, Book XXXVII, Chap. 2).

This could be both Ganges and Brahmputra as both flow from north and fall into the eastern ocean but the description it seems applies more to the former.

The invasion of Alexander the Great brought to light the rivers of the Punjab

beyond Indus. They are mentioned in the entire account of these writers as Hydaspes (Jhelum), Akesines (Chinab), Hydraotes (Ravi) and Hyphasis (Beas). The river Sutlej (Hydraus) is not mentioned by these historians, which testifies the correctness of Arrian's statement that Alexander's march was arrested by the river Hyphasis (Beas) (Arrian Frag 4). But Krateros, one of his most distinguished generals in a letter to his mother Aristopater, has mentioned Alexander reaching as far as Ganges (Strabo XV. 1,35). He asserted that he himself had seen the river which produced wholes, and he gave an account of its length and breadth which far exceeded the actual dimensions. The fact that even Sutlej has not been mentioned by Alexander's historians, the account of Ganges is out of question. It is just possible that he mistook some big river of the Punjab for Ganges regarding which he must have heard through some second hand source.

Megasthenes gave a list of the rivers not of the Punjab and Afganistan alone but also of the eastern part roughly of northern India constituting mordern U. P. Bihar and Bengal. There is no list of the rivers of the South.

The list of the rivers of the north was preserved by Arrian (Frag. 4). Magasthenes stated that of the two rivers Ganges and Indus, the former was much larger than the latter; it received ample volume of water from its tributaries which (as preserved in list of Arrian and identified at present) were the following :—

Kainas (kane), Erranoboas (Gandak or branch of Son), Kosoanos (Kosi), Sonos (Son), Solomatis (Rapti), Kondochates (Gandak), Sambos (Gomti), Magon (Mahoba), Agoranis (Ghagra), Kakouthis (Baghmati), Andomatis (Damodar of Burdwan), Errenysis (Varna and Asi of Kasi). Pliny, Arrian pointed out, mentioned two more tributaries, Prinas and Jobanes (Jumna). These rivers were identified by scholars like Renuel, Wilford, Schlegel, Lassen—Schwanbeck the compiler of Megasthenes' fragments. A few other rivers as tributaries of Ganges were also mentioned, but they were unidentified. They were Sittokatis, Kommenases, Amystis and Oxymagis. The breadth of the Ganges Magesthanes assumed when narrowest at a hundred stadia and when widest at plains it could not be seen. This river largest as it

was, descended from the mountainous country and twined eastward upon its reaching the plains, then flowing past Palibothra (Patali-Putra) it pursued its way to the sea (Strabo XV. 1, 13).

The Indus like Ganges also had many tributaries which (as preserved in Arrians's list) were the following :—Hydaspes (Jhelum) Akesines (Chenab), Hydraotes (Ravi), Hyphasis (Beas), and Hydreus (Sutlej). The unidentified rivers were Saranges, Nendros, Tontapos, Parenos, Saparnos and Soanus. Probably they were the small branches of these big rivers which in times past, when Geography had not fully developed, must have assumed different names in different countries through which they passed. Besides these rivers of the Punjab, Megasthenes also mentioned rivers of Afghanistan since it formed part of the Mauryan Empire. The names of these rivers are also preserved in Arrian's list. They were Kophen (Kabul), Soastes (Swat) and Garroia (Gomal). Kurrum is not mentioned by him. Megasthenes also mentioned a river 'Silas' (Strabo XV. 1.38) which Ktesias had mentioned as a pool in which nothing would float but every thing sunk into the bottom

(Pliny Book XXXI. Ch. 2). This river might be one 'Sila' mentioned in the Mahabharat to the north of Meru Parvat (II.1858).

The later historians did not mention any other river. In fact some of them like Arrian cared to preserve the names of all the rivers mentioned by Megasthenes. There is no mention of any river of the south by any of the Greek historians. In Roman writings we might find mention of a few like Narbada in connection with Barygaza, (Broach, the most important port on that river for trade intercourse with Rome, but the Greek writers and specially those upto the 2nd century B. C., rather called early Greek writers, have not mentioned any river beyond the list given by Megasthenes.

Rising of Rivers and Rains: Now these rivers were subject to rise in certain parts of the year when there was rain and fall of snow. This was noticed for the first time by Alexander's historians. Aristobolus (Strabo XV. 1.17) referred to the fall of snow and rain on the mountains and the regions lying at the base, so that the plains were under water when there was rise in the rivers. The

rains, he pointed out, set early in spring and continued increasing, pouring down in torrents both day and night without any intermission till there was rising of Arcturus—indicating the beginning of autumn. He did not refer to the winter rains. The rise of the river Akesines (Chenab), Nearchus pointed out, even obliged the Greeks who had encamped on the bank to shift their quarters to some higher level (Stabo XV. 1.18). Aristobolus even measured the height of water level above its normal, at 40 cubits of which twenty filled the river to the brim while the other twenty inundated the plains (Strabo XV. 1.18) The rivers often changed their courses. Onesikritus (Strabo XV. 1.20) mentioned the inundations of the rivers by which certain land was brought much above the level. The course at the mouth became marshy because of the deposit of silt by the flood tides. This marshy nature of the coast was also mentioned by Herodotus. (III. 98).

Megasthenes mentioned only summer rains. (Arrian, Indika IV. 5) and confined them to the mountains and the rivers which issued from them were large and muddy. But the rains also fell on the plains and he mentioned,

that much of the country was submerged. He also mentioned winter rains, (Strabo XV 1.20) which involved winter sowing. Eras-thones stated that India was watered by the summer rains and the level country was inundated. He referred to both winter and summer rains (Stabo XV, 1.20).

The contribution of later historians on this point is nothing original and they have simply reproduced what Alexander's historians and Megasthenes pointed out. It is in fact from their writings that we find what Alexander's historians or Megasthenes said.

Climate:—Herodotus (III, 104) referred to the excessive heat at midday and cold in the evening after sunset. This climate was confined to the Indus region which being very near the Thar desert must be very hot in the day. Sindh even at present experiences excessive heat in the day in November. The Geographical phenomenon for this could be that the sun, being on the Tropic of Cancer in the winter, brings excessive heat to the region falling on the line and Sind being in the tropics naturally experienced excessive heat. This was repeated by Ktesias who

also referred to the excessive heat; but that the sun was ten times larger (Frag 5) appears to be absurd. It seems that because of the excessive heat—which the travellers might have experienced, this was stated.

Alexander's historians mentioned that the climate was more suitable for productive purposes, the temperature was like theirs in respect of sun's rays but it surpassed them in having copious supplies of water whence the atmosphere was humid and therefore more nutritous and productive (Strabo XV, 1.22). This climatic condition they experienced in the Punjab. These histarians mentioned (Pliny, Book II Chap. 73-75) that in the town of Syene 5,000 stadia south of Alexanderia—no shadow was cast at noon on the day of solstice and that a well dug for the purpose of experiment was completely illuminated from which it appeared that the sun was vertical at that place. The distance indicates that this town being 5,000 stadia distant from Alexanderia, must have been in the upper part of Sindh and experienced the same phenomenon as indicated—namely the sun looked just over head and it was very hot.

Megasthenes (Pliny VI 22 (6)) also noticed this phenomenon as he referred to shadows falling towards the north in winter and towards the south in summer alternately among the Monedes, and Snari, next to the Prasi who according to Cunningham ('Ancient Geography' 1871 p. 508-09) must be 'Mondalæ' of Ptolemy, occupying the right bank of the Ganges south of Pataliputra, and Sabarœ of Ptolemy, a wild race of wood-cutters without any fixed habitation. This confirms Megasthenes' observance of the same phenomenon more than a thousand miles away which must be due to the fact that both the places fell in the Tropic of Cancer. Megasthenes (Arrian Indika 11) described sages going about naked during winter in the open air to enjoy sunshine, and during summer when the heat was too powerful in meadows and lay on the ground.

The other Greek historians have given no fresh and original account regarding these climatic conditions. They did not enter the country and hence had no chance of experiencing its climatic condition.

People:—The climatic conditions influence much in the structure of the people. A good

physique is always affected by mild and excessively hot climate. Herodotus called the Indians black in skin like the Ethiopians (III 100) because of the heat of the sun. The people who inhabited the marshes of the river, fed on raw fish (III 98) while there were others who were nomads (III 99) and even feeded on the fat of their brothers. This might be true of the non-Aryans whose civilisation according to Mr. R. Chandra (Memoir No. 41 of Arch-Survey) must have been confined to the Indus valley. Ktesias's account of the people of India was an improvement on Herodotus's contribution. He cared to distinguish between the Aryans and the non-Aryans. There were people who were purely white and akin to the Bactrians in that respect. Two women and five men of that class he saw, attended the Persian Court (Frag I). On the other hand he also described the Indians who were black not because of the sun but due to nature, and in this he differed from Herodotus, who assigned it chiefly to the sun (III. 106). His further contribution was the assumption of their longevity, which he fixed at 130 or 140 years and sometimes even 200 years, due to their living

in nature and none suffering from any disease (Frag 15). He also referred to the pygmies who were swarthy and black and belonged to middle India. They were dimunitive in size, not more than two cubits in height and were snub-nosed (Compare Rig Veda VII 21.5, X 99.3). The account of Pygmies is also given by Strabo XV. 1.57) and Pliny (VII 2.

Nearchus referred to the Indians as a healthy class of people, free from any disease and living upto a very old age (Arrian, Indika Frag 15). Onesikritus mentioned 130 years as the average age of an Indian (Strabo XV 1.34) which was akin to Ktesias's account. But he mentioned that the blackness of the skin was due to water. According to him (Strabo XV 1.24) water changed even foreign cattles into indigenous breed. He mentioned that the sun did not approach nearer to the Ethiopians but still they had black complexions which was due to water.

Megasthenes (Arrian Frag VII) described the Indians of early times as nomadic who were akin to the Scythians and lived in nature, but of the Indians in his time he gave a comprehensive. account by dividing them

into a number of classes according to the functions they performed (Strabo XV. 1. 40-41). This division of society was based on the Hindu division into Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The detailed account is preserved under the chapter on 'Society'. He did not mention any thing about the blackness of the skin.

Strabo went a step further by describing the blackskin of the people as solely due to the sun (XV. 1. 24). He pointed out that the scorching influence of the sun caused a great deficiency on the surface of the skin. Regarding Onesikritus's argument he stated (XV. 1. 24) that the sun may be distant from the Ethiopians but since it fell vertically on them there was intense heat which made them black with wooly and curly hairs. The Indians he said had no such Ethiopian features. Pliny did not discuss this point, though he has given some account (Book 15 Chap. 17) that concerns fabulous races. Arrian (Frag. 6) mentioned that with regard to the inhabitants there was no great difference in type or figure between the Indians and the Ethiopians. The Indians who lived in the south-west bore a closer resemblance to

forces. Aelian (Book XVII. 29) described them like walls behind which one might safely resort. In the battle of Hydaspes where they were used at greater length, they could not stand against the Macedonian archers. Ktesias also distinuished the male from the female by pointing out that when the female ones were in heat, a strong fluid issued from an orfice in their temples (Frag 3).

Ktesias did not mention a lion or cow but referred to tiger as 'martikhora' or maneater (Frag 7), with three rows of teeth, eyes pale blue, aud tale like cinnabar (Frag 7). He also mentioned the wild asses (Frag 25, 26) with big horns that were utilised in making cups which could cure diseases. These wild asses must be Indian reindeers whose horns still have the peculiarities of curing diseases like gout or rheumatism. His account of the parrot (Frag 3) which had the tongue and voice like the human being, the size of a hawk, a red bill adorned with a beard of black colour and neck red like cinnabar, is absolutely correct. This description applies more to the parrots of the hilly places than of the plains. Though they cannot actually talk but can imitate human voice like 'Sita-

the Ethiopians—being of black compexion and black haired, but the Indians who lived further to the north were akin to the Egyptians.

This entire account indicates that as usual the Greek writers perceived two sets of people, those who were fair in colour and akin to the Bactrians and the Egyptians, and those who were black and snub-nosed and were the descendants of non-aryans. No doubt the sun affected a little in the colour but there transference to colder regions could not import whiteness to their complexion.

Fauna:—The account of Flora and Fauna vegatable and animal kingdom, though goes side by side but here they have been separated, the former going under economic life while the later confining itself to Geographical account. Since animals are associated with men, their accounts must go side by side. Herodotus mentioned only camel (III. 103) in connection with the pursuit of Indians for gold. But Ktesias was more precise and definite about the animal kingdom. The most interesting is the account of elephants (Frag 3). They were used in war to demolish town and destroy fugitive

Ram'. This was also corroborated by Aelian (Book XVI. 31). Ktesias was the first to communicate to the Greeks a description of the Indian Jackal (Frag 32) under the name Krokottos from the Sanskrit 'Kroshtuka'. Its qualities attributed were that it could imitate human voice, had the strength of the lion and swiftness of the horse. Though all the qualities are not true but still the animal was jackal.

Alexander's historians did not mention the camel of Herodotus, or the parrot, reindeer and jackal of Ktesias but Onesikritus (Strabo XV 1.43) supplemented Ktesias's account of elephants by assigning their longevity at 300 years which seems too much. Nearchus (Stabo XV 1.43) mentioned that it was a great thing to possess an elephant and women who received elephants as presents from their suitors were much esteemed. Those historians also mentioned serpents. The king of Abhisara, according to Onesikritus (Strabo XV 1.28) kept two serpents 80 and 40 cubits long. The length given is absurd, but he was probably speaking of the "Ajgar." Nearchus's account (Strabo XV 1.45) that the smaller ones were dangerous and often dis-

covered in tents, vessels and walls, is correct. Nearchus also mentioned a tiger's skin (Arrian Indika Frag 15) but he never saw a tiger.

Megasthenes introduced horses for the first time (Aelian XIII, 10). He also described the way, the elephants were caught and tamed (Strabo XV 1.25) Detailed accounts regarding the animal kingdom are preserved in the accounts of Pliny and Aelian. Books VIII, X.XI and XXVII of Pliny deal with the animals, while Aelian wrote an entire treatise on the subject. Pliny referred to elephants (Book VIII Chapter 8), dragons (Book VIII Chapter II), tiger (Book VIII Chapter 25) an animal associated with swiftness, oxen with solid hoof and a single horn (Book VIII, Chapter 30), asis with skin like a fan (Book VIII, 31), probably the stag of the Ganges, apes, (Book VIII, 31) lizards, (Book VIII, 60) and wild boar (Book VIII, 78).

Among the animals of the sea, mentioned by Pliny were Shoals, (Book IX Chapter 2) pristis and balæna (Book IX, Chapter 3) the largest animals. The sea also produced turtles (Book IX Chapter 12) of such a vast size that the shell of a single animal sufficed

to roof a habitable cottage. Of the birds, Pliny spoke of parrot (Book X Chapter 41) which could imitate human voice.

Aelian besides all these mentioned, peacocks (Book V Chapter XXI). Tamed peacocks, he mentioned were kept in parks. (Book XIII Chapter XVIII).

He also mentioned cocks (Book XVI Chap. II), and Kerkion (Book XVI Chap. III) the 'Maina' which could speak like the parrot if taught to do so. Aelian's account is full of description of all sorts of animals both birds and quadrupeds, as well as whales and other fishes of the river but since it forms part of zoology, its scope in a historical treatise is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that in a historical discourse its importance lies only in determining how far the animals helped in the life of human beings. If they were wild ones they are of little or no importance to a historian.

It may thus safely be concluded that the Geographical account which the Greek historians preserved shows a fundamental unity which India possesses—a unity which is easily indicated in the map of India. The country

is sharply separated from the rest of the world by almost inviolable boundaries, very unlike the disputed frontiers which are artificial in nature and temporary in character. But India had nature's gift in matters of Geography. she had to succumb to historical forces which kept on changing Indian life. From nomadic the lowest stage of civilization among the non-Aryans, India was raised to a the highest pitch, nay the culmination or zenith of civilization through the aid of Aryans and was thus akin to the Egyptian or any other older civilization.

CHAPTER III.

POLITY.

Geography though isolated India from the rest of the world but the forces of history were strong enough to mould the political life of the country at different periods. The immigration of the Aryans had brought their supremacy over the whole of Northern India, and in Rig Veda there are references of battles for supremacy between the Aryans and the Non-Aryans (I, 47. 7-8; Iv. 16, 13; X. 22. 8) but even this supremacy was confined not to one particular king or kingdom, but there were a number of kings, who brought about the battle of Ten kings (VII. 33, 2. 5; 83. 8). Even in later Vedic literature there are references to a number of kingdoms in Northern India, like the Kuru-Panchalas (Satapatha Brahmana, iii, 2, 3 & 15', Kosala, Kasi, Videha (Satapatha Brahamana i,4,1,10. 17), and some references of which are to be found in later sanskrit literature as well. These point to the fact that despite India being a Geographical unit, there was a not

one political unit, and the historians had to confine themselves to a particular kingdom or kingdoms in northern India, in which they were interested.

Persian Sway :—Herodotus, the First Greek Historian, has mentioned the Persian sway, being exercised over north west India during the time of Darius I and his successors, which is testified by the inscriptional records of the Persian Emperor to be found at Behistan, Persepolis, and Nukshe-Rustom. In a passage, (Iv.44) he mentioned Emperor Darius I sending sent his General Scylax at the head of an Expedition to explore the Indus region. The expedition had embarked at the upper Coast of the river Indus at 'Kaspapyros'. Soon after the exploration, the Emperor occupied the region, which formed the twentieth satrapy of his Empire (III.95). This twentieth Satrapy of Herodotus corresponded to the 24th of the Persepolitan Inscription. "Although the exact limit of the Indian satrapy," as Smith has pointed out, (E.H.Ipp 40) "cannot be determined, we know that it was distinct from Aria (Herat), Arachosia (Kandhar), and Gandaria (North-west Province). It must have comprised therefore the course of Indus from Kala-

bagh to the sea, including the whole of Sind and perhaps a considerable portion of the Punjab east of the Indus."

The other satrapies, directly connected with the Indus by the inscriptions of the Persian Emperor, were Gandhara (the region of the Kabul Valley), Thatagu, (either the Gilzai territory to the south west of Ghazni or the Hazara Country further to the north-west), Haravati (the district about Kandhar in the broadest sense), Saka (possibly alluding to Seistan and the dwellers around the region of the Hamun lake) and Makran (a part of Beluchistan). This shows that they were distinct from the Indian Satrapy.

The Indian Satrapy, according to Herodotus (III. 97), paid the largest tribute of 360 talents of eugoic gold dust equivalent in modern times to about £ 1,290,000. The Persian sway over north-west India continued even in the time of Xerxes (486 465 B. C), the son and successor of Emperor Darius I, who, at the head of a vast army comprising various nations, attacked Greece, but was repulsed (VII. 65). The fact, that the Indian soldiers, as mentioned by Herodotus, (VII.86)

comprised a contingent in the Persian army under the command of the Persian Pharmazathres, the son of Artaxerxes (C. A. H. Vol. p. 190), shows that the Persian sway continued even in the time of Xerxes.

Ktesias, being the Physician at the Imperial Court of the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes Mnemon from 416 to 397 B. C., had ample priviledge of knowing about Indian politics but he did not mention the Persian sway over north-west India nor any rising, which resulted in throwing off the Persian yoke. But he mentioned a king, (Frag 14) for whom, the people had love and devotion, and whose power extended over a large area, and 300 pygmies attended the court of the Indian king because of their great skill in archery. The political account. which Ktesias gave, is thus not satisfying, though he had ample opportunities of observation.

Indian republics and Monarchies:—Alexandrian historians descrided both the monarchial and democratic states. The compaign of Alexander the Great was occupied with peace with one Kingdon and war with another. Though the names of all the

Kings and republics are not to be found in the writings of Aristobolus, Nearchus and Onesikritus, since their frgcments are lost, but what is lost, is supplemented by the accounts of later historians, especially those of Strabo and Arrian. For continuity's sake, the accounts of Strabo and Arrian are also mentioned here Alexander's historians mentioned also a few characteristics of the democratic states. On one occasion, Nearchus stated (Strabo XV. 1,30) that Iudian kings were saluted not by way of prostration as was the custom in Persia, but by raising hands in the form of Greek prayers. This shows that the Indians were devoid of servility and submissiveness, which are the features of a suppressed nation. They never considered themselves in any way inferior to the king, who was dependent on them for his safety and tranquility. On another occasion, Onesikritus (Strabo XV. 1. 30) spoke about kings being chosen for personal beauty, and were deposed if below the standard. Here it seems that personal beauty was taken in a wider sense, which implied not merely purity of skin, but also purity of character and good physique free from any defect or disease.

This is testified by earlier accounts. In Mahabharat, (Uddyoga Parva Chap. 149) there is reference to people withholding their consent when king Pratipa wanted to instal his eldest son Devapi on the throne, because Devapi had the disqualification of suffering from a serious disease. Not that alone, king Vichitra Virya was banised by the citizens when Parasu Ram invaded the kuru country, because he was fond of pleasure (Ram Bhayo-deva Nagaraira Vıpravasitah). Thus among the states, which had a democratic constitution, the king was dependent on his people for his safety and tranquility. It was not a creative instinct, but one, which had come down from earlier times, and which was witnessed even by the Greek historians.

Side by side with these constitutional monarchies with democratic elements, there were confederations consisting of several nations represented by their kings. This is clear from the account of Aristobolus, (Aelian Book VI Chap. II) who referred to the Mallois and Oxydrakais having agreed to offer a strong resistance to Alexander. They stood as an embodiment of Indian power and patriotism at that national crisis. Even at the

defence of Massaga under the Asvaka queen, it was strengthened by an alliance between king Assakenos and Abhisara (Arrian Book IV, Chap. XXVII). The confederate spirit was present in them and they knew its test. The people were well advanced in political ideals and knew that obedience to state ultimately meant obedience to themselves, so that there were few crimes, and Onesikritus has pointed out, (Stabo XV. 1. 34) that no legal action could be taken except for murder and assault. Thus safety of person was taken more into consideration than property, for which no one felt any anxiety, as the people were honest.

Among the Indian kings, who were mentioned by these Greek historians—the companions of Alexander, were the following:—Ambhir and his father the old king of Taxila, who had sent envoys to Alexander offering to help him in his invasion of India in return for the safety of Taxila (McCrindle I. O. A. G. pp. 202). The Kingdom of Taxila, according to Strabo, lay between the Indus and Hydaspes (XV. 1. 28). It was governed by good laws. The king of Taxila turned a traitor to his country. The Kingdom of Porus

lay between the Hydaspes and Akesines (Strabo XV. 1. 29). Porus made a common cause in the Imperial endeavour with his neighbour the king of Abhisara Country in the mountainous region. The territory of Sophites, (Saubhuti) lay between the rivers Hydaspes and Akesines (Strabo XV. 1. 30). Sisikothus (Sasi Gupta) was another king, who was in Alexander's train. He was probably a ruler of one of the Frontier Hill states and had been to Baktria to help the Iranians against Alexander, but then had changed to the side of Alexander (Arrian Book IV Chap. XXX). Astes, with his people Astakenoi, was a true patriot, who stood the the Greek siege by Hephastion for full thirty days till he fell fighting (Arrian Book IV. Chap. XXII). He was the king of the land of Peukelaotis and might be connected with Hastinagar or eight cities on the eastern bank of the lower Swat river, of which Pushka eavati, the capital of Candhar, was one (Cunni ngham' Anc. Geo. pp. 50). Assakenos, the king of Massaga, was another true patriot, who resisted Alexander in his march, but was killed in the battle-field (Arrian Book. IV. Chap XXVII). This was the home of free

people called Aspasioi, who were referred by Panini (IV. 1. 173) as Asmakas.

Alexander crossed the Indus in the spring of 326 B. C. and had a halt at Taxila, where Doxones offered him submission (Arrian Book V. Chap. VIII). Across the river lay the kingdom of Paurava II (Arrian V. XXI). The last two kings with whom he had encounter were Saubhuti and Phegelas on an other side of Chenab. Both offered submission. During his retreat, Alexander met both monarchies and democracies. He met Adraistai (Sanskrit Adhristas) who offered submission, but Kathaios, who enjoyed the highest reputation for courage, (Arrian V. XXII) prepared to fight. At the confluence of Jhelum and Chenab, they were opposed by a confederacy of free tribes of Malloi, holding the region between lower Ravi and Chenab, and Oxydrakai between the Ravi and Beas (Arrian Book VI. Chap. IV.) The Sivis and Agalassoi were the other people, who also offered resistence. Down the stream were the Abastanes, whom panini Called Ambasthas (IV. 1. 74,), the Xathroi, (Khattri), and the Ossadi (Vasati) who did not choose to fight (Arrian Book VI. Chap. XV). Farther

south, they passed through Sogdi under Brahmin ascendenay, and the territory of Musicanus, (Arrian Anabasis VI. Chap. XVI) who was at feud with the neighbouring king sambus and Oxycanus (Arrian Book VI Chap. XVI). The last move was on Patala, where the people submitted to the invader (Arrian Book VI. Chap. XVI). No mention is made of the king of this place.

Maurya Empire :—Magasthenes stayed for a number of years at PataliPuttra, and thus had ample knowledge of the working of the government machinery. His account of the Mauryan polity is also corroborated by the account of that great man Kautilya, who acted as Prime Minister to the Emperor Chandra Gupta. The king was the head of the state, and was the highest official in all matters. He left his palace not only in times of war, when his presence was required on the battle field, but also for administrative necessity-to judge cases and deal out even-handed justice. (Frag. XXVII—Strabo XV. 1.53). He was the highest appellate court in civil cases, but he also tried original criminal cases. Megasthenes stated (same reference) that the king remained in the Court for the

whole day without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrived when he should have attended to his person. This shows that public good was above board and private interest was liable to sacrifice at the altar of public weal. To this has been added by Kautilya, (Book X. p. 38. Shama Sastri) that when in court he never caused his petioners to wait at the door, for when he made himself inaccessible to his people, he entrusted the work to his immediate subbordinate. He would personally attend to the business of the gods, of heretics, of Brahmins learned in the Vedas, of cattles, of sacred places, of minors, the aged, the afflicted, the helpless, and of all women in order of enumeration. The urgent calls he heard without delay.

In the military sense, his contentment lay not in sending armies to the battle field and himself attending to personal and private affairs at the metropolis, but in personally directing the operations in the battle field, (Frag. XXVII-Strabo XV. 1.53) with a view to encourage soldiers. His valour and enterprise not only won the heart of Atheni, the daughter of Seleukos, but that King was

compelled to purchase peace by offering Chandra Gupta in addition to his daughter, the entire territory of Afghanistan constituting Paramisadai (Kabul), Arachotoi (Herat) and Gedrosenoi (Gandhar) in exchange for 500 elephants (Strabo XV.1.19). The king thus personally shared the national calamity and ultimately achieved success. The system of military administration is discussed a little later.

In the administrative, sphere the king was assisted by Councillors and assessors, (Strabo XV.1.48) who belonged to the highest posts-the tribunals of Justice, and general administration of public affairs. They formed a class, the seventh class of Megasthenes' division, and corresponded to the Amatyas and Sachivas of the Arthasastra, who constituted the privy council of twelve or sixteen members (Book I Chap.15). There is no mention of the portfolio system by Megasthenes.

The safety of the king was assured, by a guard of women who surrounded him inside, and by the spearsmen out side (**Frag. 27**-Strabo XV.1.53). He had to manage through thick and thin and his life was constantly

threatened by plots, so that he did not incur the risk of either sleeping in the day time or occupying the same bedroom two nights in succesion, with a view to defeat plots against his life. Having himself usurped the throne from the Nandas, he had always to be alert about his personal safety. But despite all this risk of life, the king was constantly engaged in all his onerous duties. He left his palace often to offer sacrifice or for chase in Bacchanalian fashion (same referrence). On such occasions, the road was marked off with ropes, and it meant death for man and woman alike to trespass the roped area.

Megasthenes did not mention any thing about the provincial administration, nor about the number of provinces. Even in the Artha-sastra there is no mention of the actual number of provinces. But since there is a mention of provinces with headquarters at Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri in the time of Asoka (Kalinga Edict I & II. Dhauli), which is also attested by the Pali Texts, (Divyavadanah p. 407, and Mahabodhi Vamsa p. 98) it is presumed that the continuity of provincial administration established by his grand-father Chandra Gupta remained un-

altered. The feasibility of the governance of such a vast and collosal empire, when news from one corner to another would have taken at least six months, seems a puzzling phenomenon. But these natural difficulties were easily solved by human statemanship, *i.e.* by the application or evolution of a system of machinery giving effect to extensive decentralization, and with utmost powers to the local government to cope with the administrative requirements of such a vast territory.

The third set of Government was the local government, a full account of which was preserved by Megasthenes (XXXIV-Strabo XV.1.50-52). This was characterised by a good deal of efficiency. Of the great officials of the state, some had charge of the market, some of the city, others of the soldiers. Some superintended the river with a view to see that the water might not be polluted either through some poisonous substance or sewage, which had an outlet into the river. They also inspected the canal and its branches to see that there was an equal supply of irrigation to the people. Some collected taxes and superintended the occupations connected with land, and with industrial arts. The Public works

department was under local administration, and it concerned itself with the construction of roads and other works of public utility. The grand trunk road was an example of its efficiency.

The city board which concerned itself with the welfare of the citizens, and was akin to a moderu municipal board, was composed of thirty members divided into six committees of five each. The first looked to industrial arts and the second to the care of foreigners who were assigned lodging, and particular care was taken to watch their activities during tours, with a view to ascertain if they were not foreign spies. Their safety and security was ensured by this committee. The third enquired into births and deaths. It was a committee, which was content not merely with the number of births and deaths, but it also enquired into the causes of deaths with a view to find out the rate of mortality both among the higher and lower classes of citizens. The fourth superintended trade and commerce. They looked into weights and measures, and saw that there was no undue competition, so that the interest of the small scale industrialist was safeguarded. None could deal in

more than one business unless he paid double tax. More discussion on this subject would be a matter of economics and not of polity. The fifth supervised the manufacture of commodities, which the people sold by public notice. There were special regulations promulgated by this committee for selling old and new things separately. A breach of this rule involved a heavy fine. This was mainly due to avoid fraud by people, who mixed old and new things together in order to have more, profit but also to safeguard the public against the sale of adulterated goods. The sixth and last committee collected the tenths of prices of articles sold.

The military administration was also carried on by a board of the same type consisting of thirty members divided into six committees of five each (Frag. 34 Strabo XV 1.52). The first one was appointed to cooperate with the admiral of the fleet, and the second with the superintendent of the bullock teams used for transporting military engines, food for the soldiers, provendor for the cattle, and other military requisites. The third had charge of the infantry, the fourth of the horses, the fifth of war chariots and the sixth

of elephants. It was not an autocracy of the Senapati, who could have turned tables by winning military on his side, as was done in the time of Brihadratha in 185 B.C., when Pushyamitra Sunga, the Senapati, assasinated the Mauryan King and assumed sovereignty (C.H.I. Vol. I p. 512). Chandra Gupta seems to have foreseen such a contingency, and therefore he divided the administration into a number of committees and thus curbed the powers of the Senapati, who had tremendous powers.

But at the pivot was a regular system of espionage, and the spies formed a special class, the sixth class of society known as Inspectors or Overseers (Frag. XXXVI Strabo XV 1.48). Their business was to scrutinize multifarious activities, and make secret reports to the King. Some were entrusted with the inspection of the city while others with that of the army. The former employed their coadjutors, the Courtezans of the city, while the latter the courtezans of the camp. Only the ablest and the most trustworthy were appointed to fill such offices. This system of espionage was a regular institution. As the kings' life was in danger every now and then, and plots were

often hatched, the king had to be alert and active for his safety, which could only be ensured by the system of espionage that made the king know of all the affairs not only of the city but also of the army.

The administration of the state was carried on by regular laws. The penal code was very strict but this did not mean that the people had a dislike for unusually stiff laws. On the contrary they had a dislike for indisplined state of affairs, and a liking for peace and good order (Frag. XXVII—Strabo XV 1.53). A person convicted of false witness suffered mutilation of his extremities and one, who maimed any one, not only suffered in return the loss of the same limb, but his hand was also cut off. If he caused an artizan to lose his hand or his eye, he was put to death (same reference).

Theft was very rare and Megasthenes particularly mentioned (same reference) that in the camp of Sandrokottos (Chandra Gupta) where lived 400,000 people, theft reports at any time did not exceed the value of two hundred drachame. The strict laws had brought sound administration and a laxity therein was

probably an important factor in the decline of the Mauryan empire.

International relations demanded that the foreigners should not be deprived of Indian priviledges, though they could not have the status of a citizen. Now, as has already been pointed out above, there was a special committee to look after the interests of the foreigners; the officers had the same duty towards an alien as towards a citizen of the Empire. As Megasthenes pointed out, (Frag. XXXIV—Strabo XV 1. 50) the members of the second class attended to the interest of the foreigners. To them they assigned lodging, and kept watch over them. They escorted them on the way when they left the country or in the event of their dying forwarded their property to their relatives. They took care of the foreigners when they were sick and when they died, provided for their decent funeral.

Thus the account, as preserved by Megasthenes in connection with the Mauryan administration, offers a clue to Mauryan polity, which was not theoretical but was thoroughly practical. It was an absolute monarchy with

king as the sole monarch. But as a true Hindu Raja he governed his empire with true Hindu ideals. The interest of the people, as he pointed out, was above all personal interests and could he sacrificed for public weal.

Besides these, Megasthenes also noticed many petty principalities or tribes, which must have been subject to the Imperial rule. These principalities mentioned by Pliny (VI 21. (8-23)] were Isari (unknown), Cosyri (Khasira of Mahabharata as neighbours of the Daradas and Kasmiras), Izgi (mentioned by Ptolemy as Sizyes), Chisiotosagi (Chiconal of Ptolemy), Brachmanae, (comprising many tribes one of which were the Maccocalingae (Kalinga,) Modubae, Mohindae, Uberae, Galmo drœsi, Preti, `Calissale Sasuri and Orxulae. There are many more names but these are simply enumerations and nothing can be said with certainty whether they were real or fabulous.

The Prasi (Skt. Prachya) or the eastern people surpassed all in power and glory and their account as given is true and correct. Their capital was palibotra (Pataliputra). These were the people under the central

government. The Prasi are also referred to in various Sanskrit writings as belonging to the east. Panini's reference to them (IV 1.178) has already been mentioned in connection with Geographical aspect.

Syrian Empire:—The political background now has to change from the court at Patali-Putra to the Syrian Court, which influenced Indian Politics, and which the later Greek historians also mentioned. Seleukos Nikator, the founder of the house, had invaded this country but was repulsed. He was followed by Antiochus I (281 B.C.-261 B.C.), and Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.). In the time of Antiochus II Theos, there was the revolt of Bactria and Parthia under Diodotus, and Arsakis respectively. Antiochus II was succeeded by Seleukos II (246-223 B.C.), and Seleukos III (226-223 B.C.), followed by Antiochus III; we find that mentioned in the writings of Polybius. It is certain from Polybius (XI.34), that Antiochus III tried to assert his supremacy over the kingdoms of Parthia and Bactria, which was under Euthydemos, a Greek, who in reply to the challenge of Antiochus explained, that he did not think it fair that he should be interferred with, as he was

not a rebel. The peace was brought about by Demetrius, the son and envoy of Euthydemos, to the Syrian court. Polybius (XI.34) spoke in glowing terms of the favourable impression, which the handsome youth produced upon the Seleukid king, who offered him one of his daughters in marriage, and indicated his willingness to waive all objections to the use of Royal title by Euthydemos. And having on the other points caused a written treaty to be drawn up, and the terms of the treaty to be confirmed on oath, he marched away after liberally provisioning his troops and accepting the elephants belonging to Euthydemos. Polybius further said, (XI.34) that he crossed the Caucasus and descended into India, renewed his friendship with Sophagasenus, the King of the Indians, received more elephants until he had 150 altogether, and having once more provisioned his troops, set out again personally leaving Androsthenes of Cyzicus, the duty of taking home the treasure, which this king had agreed to hand over to him, and himself hurried back with all speed towards Mesopotamia, choosing the route that ran through Arachosia and Drangiana (Seistan) to Carmania. Who was this Sophagasenus? The

Indian history knows of no such corresponding ruler. Dr. F. W. Thomas, (I. A. 1875 P. 362) tried to connect him with the line of Gandhara. The division of the Mauryan Empire, as Lassen pointed out, (I. A. II pp 283 ff) began after Samprati, and Virasena was represented by the Buddhists as ruling in Gandhar (Tarnatha op. cit p.50). Thus he might be connected, as Dr. Thomas pointed out, with the line of Virasena. He might possibly be the son and sucessor of Virasena as his name Sophagasenus (Skt. Subhagasena) suggests. The two names with Sena at the end, appear to be indentical. If then we presume, that he was the son and successor of Virasena, and was king of Gandhar as early as 205 B C., when he renewed his friendship with Antiochus III, then possibly the date of Virasena must be fifteen to twenty years earlier,—roughly about 225 B.C. Thus it seems that the Mauryan empire had declined just after the death of Asoka in 232 B.C., and distant provinces had revolted, and assumed their independence.

No other Greek historian mentioned any other Indian King of the north-west India, and hence the political history of north-west

India, and its relation with the neighbouring Greek States, on the basis of Greek sources, cannot be ascertained. It is only a few centuries later, that we hear of a king named Phraotes mentioned by Philostratus (II, Chap. XXIII) in connection with the travel of his hero Apollonius of Tyana, who visited Taxila in 44 A. D. He threw off the Saka Sovereignty in parts of Gandhar, and belonged to the race of Pahlavas or Parthians. He was independent of Vardanes, the King of Babylon, and was himself powerful enough to exercise suzerain power over the Satrapy of Gandhara (R. C. A. I. pp. 308). It is not germane to the theme of the paper to go into details and try to connect the history from the time of Antiochus III, where we left, up to the time of this king Phraotes. Suffice it to say that he belonged to the Pahlava or Parthian dynasty and became independent ruler of the region of Gandhara, and had his capital at Taxila.

Thus the field of polity varied at different periods and in different regions, as maintained by the Greek historians. From the time of Herodotus in the 5th century B. C., upto the time of Philostratos in the 2nd century A. D.,— a period of seven hundred years, dynasties

came into prominence and crumbled to pieces. The great Achaemenian Empire, with India as its eastern limit, also broke up, and the Great Mauryan Empire, which was bigger than even the modern British India, could not stand against the forces of history, and had to succumb to its fate. Now whether the same principle applied also in the social sphere, is a subject of discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

SOCIETY.

Ancient India presented rare and remarkable phenomenon of state and Society as distinct units or entities standing distinct but not different from each other. Both were independent organisms with distinct and defined powers and functions of their own, and subject to their own laws of evolution and growth. State interference in social matters was thus limited, and a non-interference policy was regarded as the best and ideal by the state. Its function in social matters was only minimum—as much as cannot be avoided. Thus there was a well-understood and well-defined line of demarcation between the two organisms. In this, ancient Indian society contrasted with the western where it is content with merging itself into the state, surrendering its functions to the state, and depending on it. Its isolatory character brought about its self-preservation when the state was involved in turnoils incidental to political revolutions. Even when

political storms burst over the country, society was still carrying on its normal functions Dynasties rose and fell but Hindu society went on. As Megasthenes pointed out, "men may be seen drawn up in array of battle, and fighting at risk of their lives, while other men close at hand are ploughing and digging in perfect security having these soldiers to protect them" (Frag. XXXIII Strabo XV. 1. 40) It is because of the aloofness of society from state that it served to promote Hindu culture despite such political deluges, as inundated the country in different periods of its history.

Division of Society: Society, according to Varnashram Dharma, was divided into Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra but Megasthenes, who was the first Greek historian to mention the classification of Indian society, divided it into seven classes on the basis of the functions performed by them. Though they could be compressed into the original four divisions, but Megasthenes, having further classified the functions, maintained the existence of seven classes. The account of this division of society is preserved in (Frag. XXXIII—Strabo XV. 1. 39-41; 46-49).

1. *Brahmins and Philosophers:*—They were first in rank but smallest in number. Their functions were confined to performing religious rites, and offering sacrifices, and in this they were employed by private persons who wished to offer sacrifices or perform other sacred rites. The king also at the beginning of every year, at what, was called the Great Synod, performed a great sacrifice in which all the philosophers gathered together. A philosopher, who offered any useful suggestion, reduced it to writing, or suggested other measures for improving crops and the breed of cattles, or for promoting public interests, and always declared it publicly. If his prognostication proved false three times, he was required to be silent for the rest of his life so that there could be no renewal of absurd suggestions. The one, who gave sound advice, was exempted from paying any taxes or contributions This was a practical and sound way adopted by the king for getting new discoveries made by the learned men. The reward of 'free from taxation' was a source of encouraging the Brahmins and Philosophers to devise new ways and means of public uplift. The first class, namely the Brahmins and

Philosophers, was held very high in esteem, and practically every Greek historian of the later period has mentioned it. Even Alexander's historians, who preceded Megasthenes, gave an account of the sages—both Brahmins and Sramanas, who commanded great respect (Artistobolus—Strabo XV 1.61). Onesikritus was sent to converse with these sages (Strabo XV 1.63). Some performed religious sacrifices, while others were busy with enquiries concerning nature (Strabo XV 1.65). Nearchus (Strabo XV 1.66) divided them into two classes—the Brahmins who acted as king's Councillors and took part in political life, while others were engaged in the study of nature. Instances of Brahmins taking part in political life is as old as the Vedic times. In the battle of ten kings, king Sudas was assisted by Vasistha, and his rival Visvamitra was on the side of the confederates (R. V. VII, 3.32).

Strabo (XV 1.59) mentioned two sets of philosophers, the Brahmans and the Garmanes, which is an erroneous transcription of Sarmanes (Sanskrit Sramana, Pali Samana, meaning the ascetic). In the Asokan inscription (R. E. IV) there is a mention of

(brahmanasamanam—Girnar version), and respect for them was incumbent on every individual. Asoka's command was that they must be shown proper respect (R.E. III and IV, P.E. VII). It was a duty of the householders to support these ascetics and brahmins. According to Kautilya (II. 1) the royal liberality to a Brahmin, whether a ritvik, an acharya, a Purohita or a Srotriya, should take the form of the gift to him of tax-free-lands.

In Arrians' division (Frag. XI of Indika), the sophists, akin to the philosophers of Megasthenes, held the supreme place of dignity and honour. They were under no necessity of doing any bodily labour or of contributing from their own produce. No other work was required of them except to offer sacrifice to the gods on behalf of the state. They had knowledge of divination and also predicted, on matters like seasons of the year or any calamity that was to befall the state but not in relation to private fortunes. If they failed in their predilictions they took recourse to silence.

2. *Husbandsmen*:—The second class, according to Megasthenes, consisted of husbandsmen

who formed the bulk of the population. They seemed to be Vaisyas, mild in nature, and gentle in disposition. This was because of their being devoid of arms. They were exempted from the military service and they confined themselves to agriculture, which they did unfeared. Even in times of national calamities they were ploughing and digging in perfect security. The entire land was the property of the king, whom they paid $\frac{1}{4}$ of the produce as land revenue. Thus they corresponded to the Vaisyas of Manu (IX 326), who assigned to the Vaisyas the special duties as agriculture (Krishi), trade (Vipani Karma), commerce (Vanijya) and cattle rearing (Pasu—Palya). These husbandsmen of Megasthenes, thus performed the first function. Arrian (Indika Frag. XI) named this class of people "the tillers of the soil," who formed the most numerous class of the population. They were devoid of arms and had no military duty to perform. They paid tributes to the king, and even in times of civil war, the soldiers left them unmolested, lest their crops might not be damaged as might bring famine and pestilence. This vindicated the principle that the economic interest of the people was accorded

prime consideration. The poor agriculturist, despite the changes in the political life of the country, still adhered to his plough-land (Urvara or Kshetra). Even now, though more than two thousand years have passed since Megasthenes visited this country, the tiller of the soil—the peasant, is still unaffected.

Herdsmen and Hunters:—The third class of people were called Herdsmen and Hunters, (Frag. XXXIII—Strabo XV 1.41) who alone were allowed to hunt and keep cattle and to sell draught animals or let them on hire. They also received an allowance of grain from the king in return for clearing the land of wild beasts and fowls, which devoured the seeds sown in the fields. They had a wandering life and lived in tents.

Arrian (Frag. XI) called them herdsmen—both shepherds and neatherds. They were nomadic, and neither lived in cities nor in villages but on hills. They also paid tribute not in cash but in cattle. They scoured the country in pursuit of fowls and wild beasts.

The people of this class seem to possess both Kshatriya and Vaisya elements. They

were Kshatriya in the sense that they possessed arms, which, as has been pointed out before, the husbandsmen were deprived of. In this respect they were a sort of watchmen to protect cattles and traffic from wild beasts for whose pursuit they scoured the country. They were Vaisya in the sense that they performed the fourth function *i.e.*, 'Pasu Palya' of Manu, which duty he assigned to the Vaisyas.

It is just possible that this class had two distinct types of people as the title suggests —one who were herdsmen and the other who were hunters. The former one paid tribute in cattle to the king while the latter one received remuneration for their services in clearing the jungles of beasts. The first one were thus Vaisyas while the second were Kshatriyas of a mild nature who did not go to the battle field.

Traders and Bodily Labourers:—The fourth class (Frag. XXXIII—Strabo XV 1.46) consisted of those, who worked at trades, and those, who were employed in manual labour. Some of them paid tribute to the state and and also rendered certain prescribed services.

But the armour makers and ship builders received wages from the king for whom they worked.

Arrian called them Handicraftsmen and retail dealers (Frag. XII). They had to perform gratuitously certain public services, and to pay tribute from the products of their labour. But those, who fabricated the weapons of war, did not pay tribute, and they even drew their pay from the state. In this class were included ship builders and sailors employed in the navigation of rivers.

Thus this class included both Vaisyas and Sudras. The Vaisyas of this class indulged in trade (Vipani Karma) and Commerce (Vanijya). They were distinct from agriculturists or herdsmen and shepherds who performed the other two functions of Vaisyas. For trade and commerce, even ships were lent by the admiralty (Megasthenes Frag. XXXIII) who prescribed a high level of shipping and maritime activity. The labourers were undoubtedly Sudras, whose business it was to serve the upper three classes (Manu VIII, 410, 413).

Warriors:—The fifth class of Megasthenes (Frag. XXXIII—Strabo XV. 1. 47) consisted of fighting men, who were maintained at king's expense and when not in actual service, passed their time in idleness. They were always ready to take the field, for they carried nothing else save their bodies. Arrian (Frag. XII) called them warriors, who were second in point of number to husbandsmen. They led a life of supreme freedom and enjoyment. They had only military duties to perform, and they fought as long as they were required to do. They received as much as was enough to maintain them with ease and comfort. Arrian mentioned another sub-class who attended on the fighting men in camp, took care of their horses, prepared their chariots and acted as charioteers.

This class represented the true Kshatriyas, who according to Manu, had besides study, performance of sacrifice (Yajna) and charity, a special duty—the practice of arms and pursuit of a military career (X. 79). Their main business was to fight on behalf of the king and share both calamities and honours. After the war their business ended, but this did not mean that there was no regular

militia or standing army, on the contrary there was a regular army for the maintenance of peace and security.

Overseers.—The sixth class, according to Megasthenes (Frag. XXXI—Strabo XV. 1. 48) consisted of overseers to whom was assigned the duty of watching all that went on and making reports to the king. Some of them were entrusted with the inspection of the city and others of the camp. The ablest and the most trustworthy were appointed to fill these offices. Arrian called them superintendents (Frag. XII). They acted as spies and looked carefully into the activities of the people in the country and in the towns, and reported every incident to the king. They always supplied true reports.

It is difficult to say in what class of Hindu society, the people of this profession belonged. The qualification or the test of the people in in this service was that they must be most trust-worthy and possess general ability. So the people of this class could comprise members of all the three upper Hindu castes, as general ability and trustworthiness were not confined to Brahmins alone. It was more

or less an administrative division rather than a social distinction. Its circle was a narrower one and included only those who had to perform this function alone. Probably they corresponded either to the 'Pradeshtris' or to the 'Gudha Purushas' of the Artha Sastra.

Councillors and Assessors:—The people of the seventh class were called Councillors and Assessors, (Frag. XXXIII-Strabo XV. 1. 48) or Councillors of state (Arrian Frag. XII). To them belonged the highest posts of government, the tribunal of Justice, and the administration of Public affairs. It was the smallest in point of number but was distinguished by superior wisdom and justice, hence it enjoyed the prerogative of choosing governors, chiefs of provinces, deputy governors, superintendents of treasury, generals of the army, admirals of the navy, controllers and commissioners who superintended agriculture (Arrian Indika Frag. XII).

Like the first, it was more or less an administrative class. It corresponded to the 'Matyas' and 'Sachivas' who were the highest officers of the state and received the highest salaries. It was not possible, as Megasthenes

pointed out, (Frag. XXXIII-Strabo XV. 1. 48) for a member of a class to marry outside his own caste or exchange one profession or trade for another, or to follow more than one business. The exception was only in the case of Philosophers, who for their virtue, were allowed the privilege. These regulations were meant mainly to preserve purity of blood and talents, and skill in trade and profession. Megasthenes here seems to be at fault, he failed to distinguish between the regulations that governed marriage and those that governed crafts. No doubt it is a fact that a person, according to Varnashram dharma, could not marry a girl not belonging to his own caste but it did not mean that it was not possible for a person belonging to one class changing his profession. According to Narada, the considerations of caste did not affect the admission of apprentices into a craft (V. 16. 21). This is proved, not only by the aforesaid salutary rule stated by Narada, but by universal permissive regulation contained in all the important law books, authorising the twice born classes to take to an occupation of an inferior caste in times of distress, or failure to obtain a living through

lawful labour (Gautam VII.6; Vasistha II.22; Baudhayana II.4,16, Visnu, II.15; Manu X.81)

Marriage :—The question of marriage was referred for the first time by Alexander's historians. Besides legal ones, they mentioned many illegal forms of marriages. Aristobolus referred to the 'Asura' from of marriage—acquisition by purchase. At Taxila, he mentioned (Strabo XV.1.62) a man unable to get his daughter married on account of poverty, sold her in the market place. Nearchus mentioned (Strabo XV.1.66) that among certain Indian people, a girl was put as a prize of victory in a match, and the winner obtained her without paying a price. This is another form of marriage. Even Arjuna had to exhibit his feats of archery before winning Draupudi in marriage.

Magasthenes spoke of Polygamy and 'Arsa' form of marriage, where the girl was brought from the parents in exchange for a yoke of oxen (Frag. 27 Strabo XV.1.54). In the same fragment, he also mentioned that the end of marriage was 'finding helpmates' for some, and pleasure, and filling their houses with children for others.

Strabo (XV.1.30) speaks of the practice among Kathians of husband and wife choosing each other, and wives buring themselves along with their dead husbands. This kind of marriage was designated "Gandharva." It was out of intense love for her deceased husband that a woman became a 'Sutte'. Arrian (Indika Frag. XVII) referred to marriages without dowries, but women, as soon as they were marriageable, were brought forward by their fathers and exposed in public to be selected by the victor in feats of valour and manly exercises. There is no mention of Polygamy by him.

Suttee :—Polygamy, as mentioned by some of the Greek Writers, did not mean that there was loss of fidelity. On the contrary women vied with their co-wives to be given preference for immolation as a 'Suttee', *i.e.*, burning with the dead husband,that was mentioned for the first time by the Greek historians (Strabo XV.1.62). They burnt themselves gladly and those, who refused to do so, led a life of disgrace. Onesikritus (Strabo XV.1.30) confined it only among the Kathians. Neither in the Rig Veda, nor in later Vedic literature, do we find any mention of 'Suttee.' Hence it

was a much later introduction. Onesikritus' assumption, that it was in vogue only among the Kshatriyas, might be true, since Kshatriya women alone had frequently to face frequent deaths among the warrior classes. The husbands died on the battle field, and a large number of them became widows. They preferred to follow their dead husbands to a life of ignoble ease than the lot of widows. In Megasthene's account we do not find any mention of the practice of Suttee. Perhaps it was introduced much later in northern India, and was confined only to the Kshatriyas of the Punjab—the seat of Hindu culture in Rig Vedic times.

Festivals:—The Indian had a social life of the most advanced type, which was associated with a number of festivals. The Greek historians did not mention of any festivals in which the common people alone participated. None of them described any Royal festival in which the people were much interested. Megasthenes was, the first, to mention the Royal hair washing ceremony,—which was a great festival (Aelian Book XV. Chap. 15). This took place once a year. It was a day of gaity and amusement, and

characterised by fight among men, animals and other objects of pleasure, that excited astonishing interest. Before the close of the spectacle, elephants came forward to fight and with their tusks inflicted death wound on each other. In the end both contestants were killed. These festivals show that they were held under royal anspices. Regarding the common festivals, the Greek historians were silent. The social gathering, which entaited physical suffering among the participants, was stopped by Asoka, as we learn from his inscriptions, (R. E. I. Na cha Samajo katavya). The emperor saw many defects in a samaja (R. E. I. Bahucham hidosam samajam hi pasti).

Dress and Food:—The social life of the Indians, as may be inferred from the Greek writings, was of no mean order. In the ordinary sphere, it varied according to regions and periods. The dress of Indians, as mentioned by Herodotus, consisted of a garment made of rushes. They cut the weed out, and having beaten and plaited it like a mat, wore it (III. 98). Ktesias did not mention the dress of Indians directly, but he spoke of a worm, which the Indians grinded into powder and

employed it in dyeing robes, tunics and other vestments (Frag.22). He also mentioned robes made of coloured skins (Frag.23). Nearchus described the dress of Indians (Arrian Indika Frag.XVI). They wore a tunic which went down to the knees, a piece of cloth round their shoulders and a turban. The rich ones put on earrings of ivory and dyed the beards in different colours. From the sun, they protected themselves by an umbrella, and put on shoes of white leather elaborately carved. In war, they carried long bow and a quiver of arrow and a two headed sword with a broad blade. The dress was made of finished cotton, which these historians mistook for wool, and Nearchus stated (Strabo XV.1.20) that their beds of fine cotton were made from the wool.

Megasthenes (Frag. XXVII-Strabo XV.1. 54) contrasted the simplicity of Indians in other respects with this love of finery and ornamentation in dress. They wore dresses worked in gold and decorated with precious stones, also flowered robes made of fine musline. Attendants followed them with umbrellas; for they held beauty in high esteem and resorted to any device, which helped to improve their appearance.

Strabo (XV 1.30) mentioned that the Indians, by way of decorating their persons, dyed their beards with a great variety of the most florid hues. That custom prevailed elsewhere among many of the Indians, who bestowed great attention to dying their beards and garments with variegated colours, which their country produced. The people were fond of ornaments, but in other respects were frugal.

The dress, as described by these historians, is also corroborated by the sculptures at Bharhut. The Bharhut sculptures show practically the same dress,—a dhoti. a light scarf and a turban. There are no traces of boots, which are to be seen for the first time in the life size statue of king Kanishka found at Muttra and now at the Curzon Museum of Archaeology in that city. The wearing of beard was not an indigenous practice and seems to have been inspired by Persian influence. The military uniform is also similar to that of a soldier at Bharhut. Though there is a slight difference concernig shorts, but the rest is as usual. Now the food of the Indians varied in different regions, which prevails even to-day. Herodotus (III.98) men-

tioned raw fish as a food for those, who inhabited the marshes of the river. The others, who were civilised, lived on herbs and a grain of the size of the millet. Ktesias (Frag.22) mentioned the food of the Kynokephaloi, living on the mountain, consisting of the millet of the sheep and also probably the curd. They also ate fruit of the 'Siptakhora', a tree which produced amber. They exchanged their products for loaves with the Indians. Alexander's historians mentioned both rice and fruits (Strabo XV.1.18). Salt was mentioned for the first time by these historians as a product in the territory of Sopeithes (Strabo XV.1.30).

Megasthenes (Frag. XXVII—Strabo XV 1.53) mentioned the frugal nature of their food, which consisted principally of rice pottage (curry of rice). They did not take wine except on sacrificial occasions. They had no fixed hours for meals, which had to be taken in common (Strabo XV 1.64). Arrian mentioned Indians living on grain, but the hill men ate the flesh of animals of chase. (Indika —Frag. XVII).

The nature of food, as described by these historians, shows that it was very simple,

which is true; since the Indians as a rule were content with plain living and high thinking.

Slavery:—One of the important social institutions, which attracted the attention of Europeans for a long time, was not in existence in India in ancient times. Alexander's historians, as well as Megasthenes (Arrian Indika Frag. X) mentioned its non-existence in ancient India. It might not have been present in that period, or not in such a form as the Greeks took it, but instances of the existence of slavery in ancient India are found in Sanskrit literature. The Jatakas mentioned them to be the consequences of capture (IV 220), commutation of death sentence, debt (ibid. VI 521), and wilful debasement (Vinaya 1.72). Even Manu (VIII, 414, 417) has mentioned seven kinds of slaves—capture in war (dhvajahrita), a slave for food (bhakta-dasa), a hereditary slave (datrina), by inheritance (paitrika) and a slave under debt (danda-dasa). He could not change his status, which was due to birth.

Disposal of Dead:—The disposal of the dead, which meant the end of the drama of human life, also attracted Greek attention. Alexan-

der's historians mentioned the custom as prevailed among the Iranians. Aristobolus mentioned dead ones being thrown to vultures (Strabo XV 1.62). This might have been true of some tribes on the Indian border, who were influenced by the Persian customs. Megasthenes (Frag. XXVII—Strabo XV 1.54). mentioned that tombs or mounds—plain in shape and of low height, were raised over the dead. This conflicted with Arrians account, who no doubt mentioned about tombs being erected, but not to vindicate the memory of the dead, since their virtues were enough to preserve their memory. The interment of the dead was not described by Herodotus, whose account of the disposal of dead bodies applied not to the civilised Indians, but to the brutal and barbaric ones, who never died a natural death, since their body was eaten up by their relatives the moment they fell sick, lést the flesh be not decomposed (Hero. III 100).

The later historians, among whom was Artemidorous, speaks of tombs being erected over the dead. The practice of erection of burial was as old as the Vedic times, which is testified to by a recent discovery of Dr. Bloch

in 1910 at Nandangarh where the burial mounds, he discovered, contained the ashes of the dead in an urn. Full discussion on tombs is given under Art and Architecture.

Thus the account of Indian society, as preserved by the Greek historians, was not one of which a modern Indian need feel ashamed. The account shows that Indian society was a perfectly matured one and was not unaffected by the stirrings of cultural growth in neighbouring countries. Their ordinary life was not dull and they were most efficient in their work, which was the outcome of the division of society, involving division of labour and specialisation of industry. How the division of society brought about an economic development with even modern economic principles, is the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMIC LIFE.

The Indians, though highly developed in political and social order, were in no way inferior in the field of action. Their economic life was not self-sufficient but involved the entire process of production, consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth. This process could not be perceived by either Herodotus or Ktesias because, firstly, they did not know about these economic conceptions, and secondly, they did not care to enquire if the satisfaction of want was an easy affair or a complex one. Their contentment lay in the fact that Indians could satisfy their wants. This they did not tell if it was done through a complex process involving the entire economic process of production, distribution, exchange and ultimately consumption of the products to satisfy their wants.

Economic Conceptions.—In Herodotus's 'Historica we do not find any mention of agriculture

or tilled land, though there is a reference to a grain of the size of millet that sprung up spontaneoulsy from the earth without cultivation (III. 100) Raw fish was the only other product on which they lived. According to Herodotus, this conception of life was a self-satisfying one. They worked, got the products out of their labour, and satisfied their wants. Thus the process of economic life was confined to want, effort and ultimately satisfaction.

Ktesias' account is an improvement in the sense, that the Indians are referred to not as self-sufficient in respect of their needs, but they had realised the economic conception of barter by which they could have more wants satisfied, and a better economic activity. He mentioned the case of the Kynokephalois living on the mountains, who had dried fruits which they exchanged for loaves of bread and flour from the Indians. (Frag. 12). Their production was individual and they had no idea of collective workmanship.

But Alexander's historians mentioned a full-fledged economic life involving production, consumption, distribution and exchange

of wealth. This shows, that since they entered India, they perceived the economic life in its true colours. Nearchus (strabo XV. 1. 66) mentioned common workmanship involving the process of distribution. At the common gathering, he said, each took what was enough to support him for the year. Each had to work before he could get a share. This vindicated economic life of the highest order. In the production, besides land, labour and capital there was organisation and enterprise, since there was common workmanship. Now, as there was common production, process of distribution also came into force and more demands, because of exchange and barter, could be satisfied. They had ultimately consumption or satisfaction of want.

Megasthenes' contribution in the field of economics was the use of "money and credit". As money and credit play an important part in economic life, the Indians were not unacquainted with their use. In a state, which is well advanced, the economic life centred round production, consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth with money and credit as its agencies for functioning the above process. The coins were probably punch marked

coins issued by the shroffs and bankers; as there is no reference to coins being minted by the kings prior to Kanishka. Thus the Indians manifested the highest economic life in the time of Megasthenes.

Later writers made no contribution in this respect. As the economic life was itself advanced, they had nothing to add. This economic life of the highest order was due to the stability of the state, and political and social outlook of the highest type, which helped much, as is true, in developing advanced economic ideas. A barbaric society, or a wandering tribe cannot think of the entire process of economic life.

Agriculture. This process of economic life was manifested through many occupations, one of which was agriculture. It was an indigenous industry and had been continuing since a long time in the same process despite political deluges. The agriculturist of the present day worked in the same manner as his ancester did in ancient times. The Greek writers did not fail to notice this industry which was indigenous to the soil. Herodotus, as has been said before, mentioned a grain of

the size of the millet (III-100) which grew spontaneously without the normal observance of the method of cultivation.

Ktesias did not mention anything about agriculture or even about grains. But there is a reference (Frag. 22) of the Kynokephalois exchanging dried fruits for loaves of bread and flour with the Indians ; so it is inferred that the Indians did produce some sort of grain and were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Alexander's historians gave a detailed account of how the crops were sown. Aristobolus mentioned rice standing in water and sown in beds. The rice plant, he mentioned, was four cubits in height, had many ears and yielded a large produce (Strabo XV. 1. 18) Onesikritus (Strabo XV. 1. 18) mentioned 'bismoron', a grain little smaller than wheat. It must be barley, as Aristobolus pointed out that rice was husked in the same way as barley. It was roasted after being thrashed out, and men could not take it away before it was roasted in order to prevent the seed from being exported. There was common workmanship in agriculture.

In Megasthenes' account we find agriculture confined only to a particular class, the

herdsmen, (Frag. XXXIII Strabo XV.1.40) who, being vaisys, were mild and gentle in nature and were exempted from military service. They cultivated the land undisturbed, and without any fear from political cataclysms. The entire land belonged to the state and they had to pay ¼ of the produce. Megasthenes did not mention the crops that were sown, but his account of the food of the Indians, (Frag. XXXII Strabo XV.1.55) which consisted principally of rice pottage, shows that rice was the commonest crop sown in the east (prassi), with which part of the country he was closely associated. He mentioned (Strabo XV.120) that there were two crops every year both of fruits and grains. This was also corroborated by Erasthones, who spoke of winter and summer sowing, and of rains at both seasons alike. (Strabo XV. 1.20).

Strabo (XV.1 13) assigned crops to various seasons. During the rainy season flex and millet, as well as sesamum, rice and bismoron were sown while in the winter season wheat, barley, pulse and other esculents were sown with which they were acquainted. Most of the account concerning agriculture, which

Strabo wrote, was from Megasthenes' 'Indika' and Strabo's originality lay only in adding crops in the seasons.

Arrian, (Indika Frag. XI) like Megasthenes, confined agriculture only to a particular class called 'tillers of the soil'., who had no military duty to perform. The soldiers left the crops unmolested in cases of civil war; as the damage involved pestilence and famine. Hence the agriculturist had no fear, and carried on his work without let or hindrance even when a battle was raging near by. Arrian did not mention the crops that were sown, probably, because Megasthenes also did not mention that. He copied Megasthenes' account though he changed the names with a view to indicate his originality to the fellow Greeks, but the material he could not alter though he tried to add a little.

Fertility of the soil & Flora:—Indian soil, being naturally fertile, produced fine specimens of beautilul trees and flowers, which did not fail to attract the notice of the Greeks. Herodotus did not mention any particular trees. The Indian reed, being very useful, specially attracted his notice (III 98) Ktesias,

like Herodotus, did not mention anything about the fertility of the soil though he referred to the Indus region being devoid of rain, and watered by the rivers. This might be true of the lower Indus region, which was not merelv watered by the river Indus but also by Mihiran, a river which existed up to the 14th century M.H.C. p13). Ktesias was the first, to distinguish between the male and female reed (Frag 6). He also spoke of other trees like Karpion (Frag 28), which Dr. Caldwell (G.O.D.L. p 105) considered to be equivalent to Tamil "Karuppa" (sanskrit karpura) meaning camphor. He also noted palms, (Frag 13) whose fruits were much larger than the Babylonian ones.

The Alexander's historians attributed the fertility of the soil not to rain alone, but also to the rivers, which brought great quantities of soft and fertile soil down the mountains (Nearchus, Strabo XV.1.16). There was both a summer and winter crop. They also mentioned many remarkable trees. Onesikritus (Strabo XV.1.21) noted some large trees of which the branches grew downwards and assumed shape like a tent. The size, they assumed. was very large, and they could shel-

ter even fifty horsemen. Nearchus (Strabo XV.1.20) mentioned a reed tree which produced honey without the association of bees. This must be the sugar-cane plant. Besides these, they mentioned that India produced many medicinal plants and herbs (Strabo XV.1.21).

Megasthenes (Frag XI Strabo XV.1.20) indicated, that the fertility of India was evidenced by the fact that the soil produced two crops every year, both of fruits and grain. This was also testified by Erasthones (Strabo XV.1.20). Megasthenes mentioned trees producing furits, and roots of the plants, particularly the reed, being very sweet. Megasthenes did not mention any thing else about the flora. He might have had touched the subject but did not leave an exhaustive account.

Strabo also did not speak anything original about the flora but he did speak of the fertility of the soil. He ascertained (XV.1.26) that the mountainous regions and the northern country were most habitable and fertile, while the south was fit to be occupied by wild beasts because of the scorching heat and scar-

city of rainfall. Between the Hydaspes (Jhelum) and Akesines (Chenab), the land he mentioned, (XV.1.29) was the country of Porus, which was very fertile, and there were as many as 5000 cities, and in the neighbourhood was a forest full of pine, fir, cedar and various other trees fit for shipbuilding. The timber was brought down the Hydaspes. He also mentioned date palms (Strabo XV.II.7).

Pliny's account of Indian trees is contained in (book XII chap. 4 (8-13)). Ebony tree was mentioned by him for the first time, which Herodotus had assigned to Ethiopia (III 97). The better one was scare and free from knot. It was black and lustrous. The fig tree produced small fruits. It propogated itself far and wide with its vast branches, as mentioned previously by Alexander's historians. It served as an enclosure for shadow and protection. The tree had leaves of the shape of an Amazan buckler and the fruit, it bore, was ripened by the excessive heat of the sun. The tree was found more particularly in the neighbourhood of the river Asikni. Another tree 'pala' (which bore fruits called 'ariena') was much favoured by the sages. It was

remarkable for its wonderful sweetness. He mentioned the olive tree, the pepper plant and the grape wine. Arrian did not mention anything about the plants and the roots which served as antidote in snake bite. At another instance, Aelian, (Book XII Chap. XVIII) while describing the royal palace, referred to the olive tree which was Indian. Thus this account of Flora, as preserved by the Greek historians, is sketchy and poor in comparison to their accounts of other aspects. It cannot be said, whether they were interested in botany or had a dislike for the subject. Being pagan by religion, they should have devoted themselves to the natural aspects, but they did just the contrary.

Industry:—Although the bulk of the population was engaged in agriculture, it did not follow that the field of industry was left unexplored by Indians. On the contrary Industry, which is as old as the vedic times when there was a striking development in industry and occupation (Yajura—V. S. S. XXX 7), attracted Indians at length, and the Greek writers did not fail to notice this tendency. Even Herodotus and Ktesias, whose accounts are considered as fabulous, gave

almost a correct account of the industrial activity of Indians.

Herodotus (III 98) spoke of Indians, inhabiting the marshes of the river, being engaged in fishing. They went out in boats made of reed, and self-sufficing as the goal of their industrial enterprise was, they were concerned only with the satisfaction of their personal wants. Ktesias (Frag 22) mentioned Indians manufacturing swords, such as were used in hunting wild animals, and bows and javelins, which they exchanged and bartered. Thus it was an improvement from self-sufficiency to dependency on others for the satisfaction of wants.

Alexanders' historians noticed a highly developed industrial organisation culminating in the construction of big flotillas, one of which was constructed for the safe voyage of Nearchus down the rivers to the Persian gulf. Even Arrian (Book VI Chap. XV) has mentioned the construction of dock yards, and supply by the tribe called Xathroi of a galley of thirty cars and transporation of vessels, which were built by them. This shows that shipbuilding in India was a regular and

flourishing industry of which the output was quite large. Nearchus (Strabo XV 1.20) mentioned fine webs of cotton being made from the wool (mistaken for original cotton to be found in the trees), and the Macedonians used it for stuffing mattres, and paddling saddles. This denotes a highly developed cotton industry for the manufacture of *dhotis*, tunics and scarfs. The Indians also used umbrellas (Arrian Indika Frag. 7), and dyed, not only their beards, but also their robes and tunics, by which it may be assumed that there was a number of cottage industries. Umbrella makers and dyers were present even in Buddhistic India, roughly about the 6th century B.C. (R.D. B.I. Chap. VI).

Megasthenes mentioned regular manufacturers of military implements, and shipbuilders (Frag. XXXIII—Strabo XV 1.46), They formed the fourth class. The armour makers and shipbuilders received wages and even drew their salaries from the State. The other cottage industrialists, like dyers and weavers, must have been carrying on their industrial activities as usual; though there is no special mention of them, but the description of dress

of the people leads us to assume their presence in the time of Megasthenes.

Strabo (XV 1.20) mentioned the wheels of carriages being manufactured out of the branches of trees. This industry in wood must have been of a still earlier age. The whole of Pataliputra was made of wood, and had wooden gates and towers. This shows that plinth was laid in Megasthenes' time in wood work. Pliny (VI 22) also gave an account of ship-building in his description of Tabropane. Ships were built with prows at each end for turning about in narrow channels.

The above account shows that there was industrial activity of an advanced type. The people were so expert in handicrafts, that they could atonce imitate anything placed before them. When they saw the Macedonians using sponges for the first time, they atonce manufactured imitations of them with fine thread and wool to make it look alike. They also imitated certain other articles which indicated their intelligence, delligence, assiduity and general industrial capacity. The historians are silent on common productions in industry. It is just possible that only those, which were

under state patronage, had common productions while others, like dyers and weavers, had cottage industries. These historians did not speak of democracy in industry or of guilds "which looked to the affairs of the particular industries, accounts of which are preserved in Sanskrit literature" (M.L.G. A.I. p. 36).

Minerology: In the field of Minerology, the Greek vision was not narrow. The historians described all the minerals and pearls that could be found in India. Herodotus, the first Greek historian, mentioned gold as a product of India. His account, as preserved, (III 102) is very interesting. He related "There are other Indians bordering on the city of Caspatyrus and the country of Pactyice, settled north ward of the other Indians, who resemble the Baktrians in the way they live. They are the most warlike of the Indians and are sent to procure gold, (paid in tribute to the Persian king); for their country adjoins the desert of sand. In this desert, and in the sand, there are ants in size, not quite so big as dogs, but larger than foxes. Some, that were captured, were taken thence, and are with the king of the Persians. These ants, forming their habitations underground,

heap up the sand, as the ants in Greece do, and in the same manner, and they are very like them in shape. The sand that is heaped up is mixed with gold. The Indians therefore go to the desert to get this sand, each man having three camels, on either side a male harnessed to draw by the side, and a female in the middle. This last man mounts himself, having taken care to yoke one that has been separated from her young as recently born as possible; for camels are not inferior to horses in swiftness, and are much better able to carry burdens." "The Indians (III.105) go to the place and when they arrive at the spot fill their sacks with sand and return home with all possible speed. For the ants, as the Persians say, having readily discovered them by smell, pursue them and as they are the swiftest of all the animals, not one of them could escape except by getting the start when the ants were assembling."

Nearchus, an honest man as he was, also gave an account of the gold dug up by the ants, (Arrian Indika XV) which were as big as foxes, the skins of which were brought to the Macedonian camp. Magesthenes (Frag.

XXXIX, Strabo XV.1.44) also gave an account of these ants. He mentioned "among the Derdai, a great tribe of Indians, who inhabit the mountains on the eastern borders, there is an elevated plateau about 3000 stadia in circuit. Beneath this there are mines of gold which are worked by ants. These ants are not inferior in size to wild foxes. They run with amazing speed, and live by the produce of the chase. They dig up the ground in winter and pile up heaps of earth, as moles do at the mouth of the mines" Pliny (Book XI. C. 31) also mentioned, "The horns of these Indians ants were miraculously fixed in the temple of Hercules at Erythrae. They are of the colour of cats and size of the Egyptian wolves. The gold, which the ants dug up in winter, the Indians stole in summer when the violence of the heat compelled the ants to bury themselves under ground. But the ants, being aroused by the smell of the robbers, rush out of their holes and overtaking the fugitives, as they frequently do though they were mounted on the swiftest camels, tear them to pieces, so great is the speed and the ferocity of these animals and withal their love of gold."

These gold digging ants, till a very late period, were supposed to be some extraor dinary kind of ants, or some other animals mistaken for ants. It was Prof. Wilson, quoting Mahabharat (II.1858), who brought to our notice that the Sanskrit word for ant gold was 'Paippilika' which meant 'gold dust paid as tribute', and not 'gold dug up by the ants. The fact is that there were no ants but a class of ferocious people who along with their wild animals dug up gold. The digging business, they themselves performed while guarding was done by the animals. Due to intense heat, it was just possible that some of the animals died and the Indians who went in search of gold, finding dead animals, thought that gold was dug by these animals. They took the body to the Emperor who preserved the skin and the horns as an embodiment of their valour and enterprise. The Greek and Roman Emperors, who had a fancy for such curious things, happened to get these horns and they preserved them.

These miners were Tibetan mastiffs, better known as the Griffins, of whom Aelian gave an account (Book VI. Ch. XXIII), which is also corroborated by later historians especially

Philostratos, who mentioned 'golddigging gryphons' among the marvels (McCrindle: A I. I. C. L. p 192). They were of a breed of unmatched ferocity and inhabited the region north of Kashmir and came into these parts accompanied by their natural companion, the yak, akin to the Indian reindeer, both in shape and in swiftness. The skins of the dead animals, they used for clothing themselves while the horns they utilised for digging sand.

Taken in this light, the accounts of Herodotus, Nearchus, Megasthenes and Pliny are true in essence though outwardly they appear to be absurd and irrational. But that is no fault of theirs. They represented the current beliefs in a true and honest spirit. Thus Nearchus could be justified of his having seen the skins of these animals as big as leopards, while Derdais of Megasthenes were the Tibetan mastiffs who lived in the mountains. Pliny's assertion, of his having seen the horns of these animals being fixed in the temple of Hercules, could also be warrantable. Herodotus had mentioned eugoic dust of gold and not solid gold; Ktesiass described the method of purifying gold (Frag

4). He mentioned that the way to procure solid gold from the ore was by melting it in a fluid form. Every year a spring was filled with fluid gold and it was drawn by one hundred pitchers made of clay for fear of its being stuck to the metal. By this process gold, after being purified, was acquired in a solid form

Silver—Ktesias was the first historian to mention silver (Frag 12). Of the silver mines, he said, there were many but not so deep and rich as in Bactria, which is true as India does not abound in silver. The Achæmenian emperors issued both gold and silver coins—Daric and Sigloi respectively, but because of the scarcity of silver and the abundance of gold, the ratio was fixed at 1:8 as compared with the normal 1. 13. 3 (C. H. I. Vol. I p. 343). The only other mention of it was made by Strabo (XV. 1. 30). He referred to both gold and silver mines existing in the kingdom of Sopeithes (Saubhuti).

Iron—Ktesias also mentioned iron of which swords were manufactured. These possessed the power of turning off hails, clouds, and lightning. He himself was given two, one by

the Emperor and the other by the Queen mother. It has been suggested that these swords possessed the properties of a magnet and were lightning conductors. But it does not seem possible that the people at such an early time were so advanced in the knowledge of physics as to understand the properties of a manget In later times, iron was used for manufacturing military implements but there is no mention of iron swords being used for turning off hail.

Copper—Copper was mentioned for the first time by Strabo (XV. 1. 69). Vessels of gold, such as large basins and goblets six feet in breadth, tables, chairs of state, drinking cups, and lavers all made of Indian copper, were used in serving. Philostratos mentioned pictures on copper tables representing the feats of Alexander and Poros being hung round the shrine (McCrindle A. I. I.C. L. p 122).

Gems—The only detailed and preserved account of the gems is to be found in Pliny's writings (Book XXXVII). He mentioned six varities of Indian diamonds. The diamonds were not found embedded with gold but in a substance akin, to crystals, which

it equalled in transparency, and resembled in having six angles and six highly polished equal facets [C4 (15).] Beryls or queen emeralds were at all events of the same nature as emeralds [C5 (20)] These beryls were distinguished by their greater size, and these were the only precious stones which the people preferred to wear without gold. Opals [C5 (21)] were at once, very unlike beryls, and in value were inferior to emeralds alone. Sondonyx, [C6 (23)] formerly regarded 'Sarda', with whiteness in it, was another precious stone. It was white in character and transparent. In the first rank, among the precious stones was the Carbuncle, [C7(25)] so called from its resemblance to fire, although it was not fusible in fire. The Indian carbuncles were not lustrous, and mostly of a dirty appearance. But above all, the Indian stones dimmed the sight by reason of their brillancy Besides, there are many other stones mentioned by Pliny but for a historical treatise, it is enough to say that Indian minerals were known to the Greeks. The pearls, Megasthenes (Frag LB, Pliny IX. 55) connected with Pandaea, daughter of Heracles, who had become queen of a great kingdom

in the south. In fact it was the Pandya country of the south famous for pearls. The pearls were found in the sea and were meant for women's adornment.

Livestock—Those Indians, who had no other business to do, adhered to 'Pasu Palya' (or keeping animals) and in course of time they formed a class by themselves. Megasthenes assigned a separate class or division to them. (Strabo XV. 1. 40.) Even Alexander captured a fine breed of 23000 oxen in the country of the Asvakas, and sent them off to Macedonia. He received from Taxila 3000 oxen and 10,000 sheep, from Sopheites (Saubhuti) his fighting dogs, and from the Kshudrakas tame lions and tigers. Horses and elephants of course were in great use (M. H. C. pp. 311 . It was a fundamental occupation and the people, who did not like the battlefield or the land, adhered to this occupation where they had to look after their cattles alone.

Thus the economic life of the people, as narrated by these Greek historians, was manifested through its various agencies. Economic activity was confined not to agriculture alone,

or industry, or livestock, or some other business, but it included all possible trades and occupations, which emboldens us to assert that it was a highly developed and organized economic life. The people were content neither with what they produced through direct effort, nor were they self-sufficing, but for the satisfaction of want, they had to depend on others' efforts also. This was done through the agency of exchange by money, and also by barter. Though, as Megas, thenes pointed out, there was no possibility of mobility of labour, but according to Hindu law texts, it was both vertical and horizontal. A person could change his occupation if it did not suit him. Thus we can easily presume that Indians manifested a well-developed and organised economic life based on the high economic principles.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, & EDUCATION.

The Indian civilisation based on plain living and high thinking, though lacked in great monuments of material progress, like those of the Egyptian or Assyrian civilisation, but it nevertheless excelled in intellectual and spritual progress. Life was simple, but thoughts very high. This state of spritual and intellectual advancement was not in its infancy, but a matured one having reached its zenith much earlier even in the Rig Vedic period, which exhibited an age unparalleled in the history of human progress. This is evident from the fact that many mantras, like the Gayatri mantram, touch the highest point of human knowledge, and sustain human soul even to this day.

The developed mind produced not the superstitious beliefs but learned discourses on subjects, which may appear simple but are difficult to be dealt with. It was with a rational instinct that those subjects were attempted with a view to find out the reality.

Brahmins and Sophists, as Megasthenes pointed out (Frag XLI), discussed subjects like death and rebirth with a view to find out the reality, which, they assumed, that life was the time when a child within the womb became matured, and death was a birth into a real and happy life. This statement of Megasthenes may well be compared to esoteric cosmology whose simple doctrine is, that in reality there is no manifest world but only Brahman, and what we consider to be the world is a mere illusion, similar to "mrigatrishnika" (mirage), which disappears when we approach it. Many similies in the Vedanta illustrate this life, but the best perhaps is Sankara's comparision of this life to a long dream. The moment we die, we were as it were awakened from a long dream.

But apart from the higher religious concepts of the Sophists and the Brahmins, which will be dealt a little later, even the ordinary people were never behind in their rituals, and religious ceremonies which are incumbent on every householder even to this day. The simplicity of life was contrasted with the elaboration on the religious side as vindicated by the magnitude of its pantheon. The

Greek historians (Strabo XV.1.68) mentioned a few of the important deities, the chief among them being Dionysius (Siva) and Herakles (Krishna). Though the accounts about them, as presented by Megasthenes, (Frag XLVI) appear to be absurd and mendacious, nevertheless, the essence in his account concerning these two deities is much akin to the features assigned to these gods in Sanskrit literature. He garbed these Indian deites with Greek mythology and historical traditions. Megasthenes, account of Dionysius (Frag XLVI) as over running, followed by a wandering army of revellers, garlanded with wine and joy to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals conformed with Greek tradition and mythology but in essence it represented the destroying Sakti of Siva, who is mentioned in Rig Veda (1.143.2). as Rudra. Brahma originated, Vishnu percepted, and Siva destroyed the world. His revellers must be his "ganas", referred to in Indian literature as his most obedient servants. Thus Megasthenes mentioned the destroying power of God Siva.

Heracles, according to Arrian, (Indika (Frag. VIII) was worshipped especially by the

Soursenoi (Surasenas), an independent people who possessed two great cities Methora, (Mathura) and Cleisbora (Krishnapur probably Brindaban) and a navigable river Jobanes (Jumna) flowed through their country. Here it is a true representation of Lord Krishna, whose "jamnabhumi" or motherland was Mathura, and who, according to Srimad Bhagvat, was associated with Mathura and Brindaban. His activities and his associations with Radha are on the tongue of every Hindu even to this day.

The other Indian gods worshipped by the Indians were Zensombrios, the Ganges and the indigenous deities of the country (Strabo XV 1.69). Zensombrious must be God Indra, as suggested by all the scholars, who set down from the clouds the fertitising rains without which the crops would fade, the cattles would perish and all created beings die. Ganges even to this day holds a predominant place among the Hindus as the purifier of all sins.

There is no mention of other deities by the Greek historians. Even all, that is mentioned about the Indian gods, is supposed by many

historians to be associated with mythology and fabulous tales. But that is not true. As a part of historian's duty, one has to classify scientifically for distinguishing the true from the untrue, the real from the false, and the genuine from spurious. It is not true to say that Megasthenes filled his account with fabulous tales and mythology throughout; he must have heard Brahmins eulogising the deities, and as he was dependent on the Brahmins for his knowledge to a large extent being in close association with them, he tried, as is natural, to interpret those accounts in Greek light with a view to compare them. Finding a good deal of similarity, he tried to garb these Indian deities with Greek mythology and tradition with a view to show Greek influence on the Indian pantheon.

Another important fact to be considered in connection with the Indian gods is the supremacy of Siva and Krishna, as they are the only two gods mentioned by Megasthenes and Arrian. This is due to the fact that from the period of the later Vedic literature, parallel to the development of the philosophy of Maya, Karma, transmigration of soul and 'Mukti,' there was also in progress the movement,

which led to the emergence of Rudra and Vishnu, (identical with Siva and Krishna) as great Indian gods (M.H.C p. 119). Prajapati was yielding to Rudra, figuring as a popular deity in the Yajur Veda, and the growing position of Vishnu, indicated by his identification with sacrifice, was a sign that he counted much in Vedic times. This must have led to the origin and development of the two schools of Saivism and Vaishnavism. This is evident from the fact that Megasthenes mentioned two particular tribes as ardent worshippers of Siva and Vishnu (Frag XLVI). Thus the Sivis were the ardent worshippers of Siva, while the Soursenois worshipped Vishnu.

The Greek historians failed to notice the the distinction between Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. They of course noticed certain austeric practices which the ascetics observed. Herodotus was the first to mention a certain ritual, which appears to be of the Jains (III 100). He referred to a class of people which neither killed anything that had life, nor sow anything, nor did they have houses. But they lived upon herbs and a grain that grew spontaneously. This they

gathered and ate after boiling it. This practice is applicable more to Jainism than to Buddhism. Buddha had advised his followers to follow a middle path *i.e.* simple diet but one free from self-torture. But Mahavira found in its severest forms the road to deliverence, and did not hesitate to recommend nakedness, self-torture, and death by starvation as the best means of attaining Nirvana or final liberation (C.H.I. Vol. I p. 162). He warned his disciples against hunting or causing pain to any living being, though he fell into exaggerations even here and seemed in reality to care much more for the security of animals and plants than for human beings. If this practice then is taken to be Jain then Greek sources also testify that Jainism spread earlier than Buddhism, and in fifth century B.C., when Herodotus wrote his Historica, it had reached the extreme North-Western borders of India. Mahavira was preceded by 23 Tirthankaras.

Philosophy:—Religion and philosophy are related together as body and soul. Religion without a philosophical background is as in, effective as a philosophy divorced from a

religious outlook. All philosophical ideas have a religious background with a view to make them effective on the popular mind. The Greek historians combined Religion with Philosophy and it is only in their accounts on philosophical people and ideas that we find religious elements.

Asceticism:—The Greek historians confined their Philosophy to asceticism alone. Megasthenes mentioned two kinds of ascetics, Brachmans and Garmanes (Frag. XLI). The Brachmans as is clear must be Brahmins, while Garmanes seem to be a mistake for Sanskrit Sramana and Pali Samana who are mentioned by Asoka in his inscriptions (R. E. III and XIII) as people worthy of respect from all classes. The philosophers, as Megasthenes has pointed out, resided in a grove in front of the city within a moderate sized enclosure (Frag. XLI). They lived in simple style and lay on pallots of straw and dear skins. They abstained from animal food and sexual pleasures and occupied their time in listening to willing hearers. The Brahmins did not practice ascesticism for life but to a certain period after which they entered into wordly life and married, but they took care not to

communicate the knowledge of philosophy to their wives lest they should desert them.

Of the Sramanes, those who were held in most honour, were Hylobioi (Strabo, XV.1.60) the ascetics of the wood. They lived in forests, subsisted on leaves and wild fruits, wore garments from the bark of trees and abstained from wine and contact with women. They practiced ascetism at greater length and underwent active toil by enduring physical suffering. They remained motionless for the whole day in one posture. This strict penance and suffering was also mentioned by Aristobolus. (Strabo XV.1.61) He had referred to two sages practising asceticism—one by exposing himself to inelement weather and the other by standing on one leg by holding up in both the hands a beam of wood about three cubits long, and when the leg became fatigued, supported himself on the other and continued for the whole day. Onesikritus (Strabo XV.1.63) had also related that he found at a distance, twenty stadia from the city, filteen men standing in different postures, standing or lying down naked and did not move from the positions till late in the evening.

The above account thus shows different kinds of ascetics belonging to Brahmanic and Buddhistic orders. There is no mention of any particular kind of ascetic order but from the account we inter that there were two classes of ascetics, the settled and the unsettled ones. The settled one's lived in hermitage engrossed in silence and solitude; the renowned ascetics gathered round them a band of disciples who lived with them on simple food of raw roots and fruits gathered in the forest, engaging themselves in meditation, in sacrificial rites (Yajnas) and the practice of penance (tapah), or learning from the teachers the tenets and texts of Sutras or Sastras. Megasthenes (Frag XLI) referred probably to this class of ascetics in one passage, while he also referred to another class of ascetics, the wanderers, who never settled anywhere. Coming in contact with each other occasionally they must held disccurses which drew large audiences.

Indian texts also testify to the existence of a large number of ascestic orders. The Brahmjala Sutra mentions as many as 62 Systems of docrines held by Sramanas and the Brahmans, while Jain works (e.g Sutra

kritanga) mention their number to be 363 (M.H.C. pp220 . Asceticism, as a matter of fact, is as old as the Rigvedic times when rishis or seers by 'tapas' could become 'munis' of divine afflatus. (RVIX.109.4) Practice of asceticism, mendicancy, and renunciation of the world is regularised into a system in the Smritis, which make it obligatory on every Hindu, barring a Sudra, to devote the latter part of his life to the two Asrams Vana-prastha, life in a hermitage and Parivarajaka, a peripatetic existence (Manu V.37).

Karma:—The Indian philosophical ideas were based on the doctrine of Karma, the most universal and systematic order, that one is aware of. Megasthenes mentioned Brahmins talking most frequently on the subject of death. (Frag XLI) They regarded this life as the time, so to speak, when child within the womb became matured and death as a birth into a real and happy life for the votaries of philosophy. On this account, they underwent much discipline as a preparation for death. They considered nothing that befell on men to be either good or bad; for otherwise some persons would not

be affected with sorrow and others with' joy by the very same things, their motions being as insane as dreams. This account represents the doctrine of Karma, Transmigration of soul and 'Maya' or illusion. Though the present life is the result of our past actions but the actions must be such as to make the next birth happy. The soul is something which changes bodies from time to time. This is well illustrated in Sri Bhagvat Gita "Just as a man casting off worn-out garments weareth new ones, similarity this soul casting off worn-out bodies entereth new bodies" (II.23). Man's next birth is determined by the Karmas in this life. Hence the Karmas should be such as might liberate the soul once for ever, and make it an entity of the absolute or the divine. The Greek historians well realised in the Indian philosophy what is known as 'Ava-gaman', coming and going. Death is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. The end is the final liberation from wordly 'Ava gaman'. Joys and sorrows need not affect people. They should treat them alike and prepare for final liberation. The study of the philsophy of life was not confined to men alone, but women also partici-

pated but then they abstained from pleasures of married life (Strabo XV.1. 59).

Panchatatva or Five elements:—The Greek historians also mentioned that the world was created and liable to destruction. It was a spheroidal figure and the deity, who made and governed it, had his powers diffused through all its composites. (Strabo XV.1.59) Water was principally employed in the formation of the world and in addition to the four elements there was the fifth element-nature, from which heaven and stars were produced, and the earth was situated in the centre of the universe. This account is absolutely correct. The earth is composed of five elements or 'tatvas', fromament, water, agni (fire) Vayu (air) and earth (atom). The importance of water lay in the fact that as the earth was surrounded on all sides by water, they thought that water was one of the chief constituents.

Pilgramage—Pilgramage is a very ancient and important institution and its main aim was to give a geographical idea of the motherland to the pilgrim. The pilgrim went on pilgrimage not only to have the "darshan" or view of the deity, but also to come into

contact with people of different places, and this infused a spirit of partiotism. Pilgrimage was mentioned for the first and the last time by Ktesias (Frag 8) who mentioned that people went on pilgramage to a place which took fifteen days to reach. The sun cooled down because of the spirit of devotedness. But the fact seems to be that it was only a change of phenomenon and nothing more. About the location of the place, it is not certain but it seems that it must have been a mountainous region where they experienced this change.

The account of Religion and Philosophy, though not quite adequate, offers a clue to form bigger and higher conceptions of Religion and Philosophy, which the Greek historians must have formed. The Greek historians should have been attracted much by the Religion and Philosophy of the Indians, for which they were noted in the west, but only the historians of Alexander and Megasthenes contributed on this theme. If their full accounts were preserved, it is just possible that they would have acknowledged the superiority of Indian Religion and Philosophy in balck and white.

Education—The educational systems and agencies of the time did not attract much attention. Megasthenes attributed education and learning to Bralmins alone, who formed a special class. (Frag XLI) They had the greatest prestige on account of their learning. The moment the child was conceived, men of learning began singing songs to make the birth happy both to the mother and the child, and conveyed certain virtuous counsels and suggestions. As a boy, he passed from one set of teachers to another in succession, the standard of teathers ranging with the age of the boy. As a student, the boy was a full fledged Brahmchari' for a period of thirty seven years with strict abstinence from material pleasures and comforts. After the period of studentship, he entered the second stage of life i.e. as a 'Grahastka' or householder. This period of tutorship, as mentioned by Megasthenes, (Frag XLI) is also corroborated by accounts in later vedic literature especially Chhandogya-upanishad (VIII. 7. I) where there is a mention of longer periods being prescribed for study such as thirty two years or even devote the whole life for study. The period of study, according to Manu,

depended on the subject of study and might be 36, 18 or 9 years (III, 12).

The student could also specialise in any branch of learning according to his capacities and abilities. The bent of mind was responsible for the choice of the subject. The subjects differed according to different teachers who had domestic schools for teaching that particular subject. Indirectly this has been mentioned by Onesikritus (Strabo XV. 1. 34) who referred to the people of the country of Mousikanos (upper Sindh) studying no science with attention save medicine. Even this branch of medicine was sometimes restricted to curing snake bites alone.

Writing—The entire learning, which the students acquired, was preserved from generation to generation by oral communication. Writing was introduced at a much later period. Though Indus civilisation has revealed that it was an indigenous invention by the Indian people who employed a common script of the same order as other quasi-pictographic scripts of the period such as Proto-Elamitic, early Sumerian and Egyptian, it never less is an established fact that the

people had recourse to writing at a much later date. Among the Greek historians accounting it for the first time, was Nearchus who mentioned Indians writing letters upon cloth which had been very closely woven (Strabo XV. 1. 67) Megasthenes' account, that the Indians were ignorant of writing and conducted all matters by memory work, (Frag XXV 11) does not seem to be correct in the light of Nearchus's statement as well as the Piprawa casket inscription which is dated 5th century B. C.

Strabo mentioned a letter, being sent by Poros to Caesar writtten in Greek on parchment purporting to invite him to his territory on a friendly basis (Strabo XV. 1. 13). This Poros must be some descendant of the Great Poros, and a contemporary of Caesar in the first century B. C. That, it was written in Greek, shows that the Greek language was still used is the first century B. C. in North-West-India.

Pliny referred to paper being made from payprus plant (XIII. 21). He said that for writing, the leaves of palm trees were used first, and then the barks (libri) of certain trees. (XIII. 21). These accounts demons-

trate that although writing originated much later, its development was not slow but quick and progressive. From Nearchus's time when letters were written or cloth, we come to Pliny's time when they were written on Paper. With in four centuries the stages in writing progressed from copper to palm, from palm to bark and from bark to paper. This can be possible only when writing was in a flourished condition. Taken in this light, it seems that it was much earlier than Alexander's invasion that writing was introduced, though considering the earlier achievement in learning, it was a much later development.

CHAPTER VII.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The early Greek historians did not fail to appreciate Indian art and architecture. Their love for Religion and Philosophy, for which India was famous in the west, did not make them oblivious of what was substantial and practical. Thus in their writings they combined the finite with the infinite, the tangible with the intangible and the visible with the sensuous. The philosophy of asceticism had the same appeal as the palace at Pataliputra. In short, their writings have a rare combination of Religion and Philosophy with Art and Architecture.

Among the early Greek historians—Megasthenes, Strabo, Arrian, Aelian and lastly but not the least, Philostratos, the author of the "Romance of Apollonius of Tyana", have the credit of bringing to light some of the important aspects of ancient Indian art and architecture which have been corroborated by actual finds of ancient antiquities. The earlier mounds (the father of the later Buddhist

stupas), the account of the palace at Pataliputra, and the famous temple of sun at Taxila, are some of the examples of Indian art which have been revealed by these Greek historians. The archæological excavations have testified the truth of the account of these antiquities of Indian Art as told by these Greek historians in the West.

Mounds:—Mounds or tombs are regarded as the earliest specimens of Indian art, being erected mainly for the preservation of relics or bones of the dead. They are plain and raised over the dead slowly (Strabo XV 1.54). According to Arrian, (Indika Frag. 10) they were erected not for preserving the memory of the dead, as their virtues were sufficient for the purpose. Artemidorous, the Greek traveller and Geographer, (100 B.C.) and author of the "Periplus of the External Sea", has mentioned (Strabo XV 1.73) a tomb at Athens with the inscription "Zarmanocheges", an Indian from Barygaza, who immortalised himself according to the customs of his country there. That person had accompanied the ambassadors from Porus to Ceasar and burnt himself at Athens to get relief from anxieties and sufferings which are inseperarable from a mundane

existence even to-day. With a smile he leaped into the fire and perished. Without entering into a discussion as to who this person was, it is enough to say that Artemidorous also saw a monumental piece a thousand miles away from Pataliputra where Megasthenes had seen for the first time. This shows that the erection of a tomb was a religious practice which was confined not to a particular region but to the whole of India, and even with the Indians beyond.

Thus these mounds were things of antiquity which had been handed down from generation to generation, and were erected in almost all parts of India. An earlier reference in the Rig Veda (X 18.30) reveals that they were erected over the relics of the dead and goddess Prithvi was invoked for the safe preservation of these relics. "I 'raised the earth around thee. May remain this pillar, for thou go to thy mother this Earth,—the widely extending goddess Prithivi" Dr. Bloch's excavations at Nandangarh proves the correctness of the account of these mounds as given by the Greek historians, and as a contained in the Rig Veda. He found burial mounds arranged in rows of 5 each. On

opening these he discovered at a certain depth, deposits of burnt human bones mixed up with charcoal and what is most important and interesting, a small gold leaf bearing the figure of a standing women stamped upon it. At the bottom of one of the mounds was found a stamp of a wodden pillar. (Arch Sur-Re 1904).

Now, the explanation of these accounts and dis.overies is to be found in the ancient burial customs as described in the Sutras. It will appear that the transaction relating to the disposal of the dead in ancient India was divided into four seperate acts: namely 1. cremation. 2. "*Asthi Sanchayan*" (collection ef bones of the cremated person). 3. "*Shanti Karma*" expiation and lastly "*Smasan chita*", or erection of the funeral monument. The last ceremony was however optional and is not performed in modern times. The bones after expiation are immersed into the Ganges. The bones in former times were deposited in in an urn and were placed in a field under a tree. Later on, the urn was broken and thrown away, while the bones, instead of being immersed, were placed upon the earth, and the funeral monument was erected over

the bones by piling up layers of bricks. Thus these funeral monuments, which the Greek writers mentioned, were as old as the Vedic times, and in later times these mounds gave place to Buddhist stupas which were erected either to enshrine some relic of Budha or a Buddhist saint, or else to commemorate some strictly sacred spot. (Marshall. 'Taxila' p. 35).

These Greek historians did not mention the Buddhist stupas, the reason being that they were practically identical with the burial mounds; the stupas, as a matter of fact, were not the creation of a much later period. In Maha Parinibbana Sutta (II. 158), there is a reference to all the ten claimants of Buddha's relics promising each to put up a cairn or Stupa over their portion. The Asokan inscription, (Nigalisagar) also testifies to the existence of stupas earlier than the time of Asoka. Thus the Greek account of these mounds is an important contribution for determining their value.

PataliPutra—Megathenes description of Pataliputra is more vivid and accurate. His account, mainly preserved by Strabo, (XV.

I. 36) is confirmed by the archæological excavations conducted by Dr. Spooner in 1912. "At the confluence of this river with Erannoboas, he mentioned, is situated Patali Putra, a city 80 stadia in length, and 15 in breadth. It is of the shape of a parallelogram and is surrounded by a wooden wall pierced with loop holes for the discharge of arrows. It has a ditch in front for the purpose of defence and for receiving the sewage of the city." Arrirn (Indika Frag 10) gave a similar description of PataliPutra... "the longeet city in India named Patimbothra is the land of Prasian where there is the confluence of the river Erannobaos and the Ganges, the greatest of all the rivers." The size of the city was the same as mentioned by Megasthenes.

The city of Patali Putra, as we learn from earlier literary sources, was not founded by Chandra Gupta Maruya but much earlier by king AjatSatru of the Saisunaga dynasty. According to Mahavagga Suttana, Sunidha and Vassakara, two ministers of Magadh were building a fort at Pataligama in order to repel the Vajjis (R. C. A. I pp 4). According to a passage in Parisishtaparvan, (Jacobi p 42). Udayin, the son and successor of King Ajat

Satruf founded a new capital on the bank of the Ganges which came to be known as PataliPutra. Thus it was from the Strategic point of view that this city was built to repel the attack of the tribes on the other side of the river.

This wooden city had the imperial palace which dominated it. The description of the palace, as given by Megasthenes, is preserved by Aelian. (XIII.18) "In the Indian royal palace where the greatest of all the kings of the country resides, besides much else which is calculated to excite admiration, and with which neither Susa nor Ekbatana can vie, there are other wonders besides. In the parks tame peacocks are kept and pheasants which have been domesticated. There are shady grooves and pastime grounds planted with trees." Thus the Mauryan palace, as described by these historians, with its gilded pillars adorned with golden wines and silver birds its extensive grounds studded with fish ponds, and beautified with many ornamental trees and shrubes, were much superior to Susa and Ekbatana. The theory that the Mauryan architecture, as described by Megasthenes, was purely wooden, has to abandoned in the light

of the pitch attained in Asoka's time in the art of using stone as building material, of chiselling, pressing, sizing, and polishing the most hard stone.

Dr. Spooners excavations revealed the truth of Megasthenes' description. (Arch.Sur.Re 1912-3) He reported that the trench was nearly 900 ft. long The Mauryan level was reached only in two places where those pits were sunk and in one of these ancient wood was found. (Arch.Sur.Re 1912 13) At another instance (ibid p 59) he mentioned "From the very beginning of excavations, the presence has been noticed of a thick layer of ashes just below the Gupta walls." Ashes imply fire, and though reference to it is not to be found in Greek writings but Mahaparinibbana Sutta (II, 158) puts into the mouth of Buddha the following prophecy regarding the ruin of Pataliputra. "Three dangers will hang over Pataliputra, that of fire, that of water, and that of dissention among friends". As a city situated at the confluence of the two big rivers, it was always subject to floods; while a single spark was enough to turn the entire wooden city to ashes; feuds among the tribes was an ordinary affair.

As regards the design and plan of the palace, Dr. Spooner remarked, (Ibid p 63) "Judging from the timbers that have been presented to us it is clear that the wood of the superstructure must have been very sound and massive, and that the beat of the final conflagration must have been enormous". The case of the few of the ash circles at depth varying from 4 ft over fragments of wood in horizontal position were found, which contemplated to explain as portions of the original supports on which the columns stand." (p 66).

Thus, the correctness of Megasthene's account is confirmed by Archæological excavations. There is no doubt about the truth of his statement. Living at the Imperial court for a number of years, he was not oblivious to the existence of such antiquities.

Taxila:—The account of the famous temple of fire at Taxila is preserved by Philostratos in connection with the romance of Apollonious of Tyana. Philostratos mentioned (Book II Chap. XXV) "Taxila was a city of about the size of Ninerab, walled like a Greek town and the residence of a sovereign. Out side the

walls was a beautiful temple of shell marble with a shrine and many columns. Round the shrine were hung pictures in copper tablets representing the feats of Alexander and Porus. The various figures were carved in a mosaic of orichalure, silver, gold and oxydyed, copper but the weapons were carved in iron. The metals were so ingenuously worked into one another that the pictures, which formed, were comparable withthe production of the most famous Greek artists. Appolonious waited in this temple till he was invited by the king, whose name was Phraotes, to enter the gates of the city and present himself at the palace." It is possible that the temple, mentioned by Philostratos, is the Apsidal temple at Jandial found in the excavations at Taxila. "They saw", philostratos mentioned, (Book II Chap. XXII) "a temple in front of the wall about 100 ft in length and built of steel like stone." The wood in front of the wall defined the position of the temple and the travellers coming from the north would naturally wait outside the nothern gate of the city. The description of the inner side, as disproportionately small, is significant for this is specially a noticeable feature of the Jandial

temple. Though the temple is consideradly more than 100 ft in length but if we exclude the peristyle, then the length comes generally to the same.

Regarding the description of the palace, which was considerably large and well built, some features are mentioned by Philostratos. (Book II Chap. XX) "It was no less magnificent an architecture and the male chamber and the porticos and the whole of the vestitute was very chaste in style" These remarks are valuable as affording substantial correctness of his account of Taxila, which we find somewhat remarkable and corroborated with the secular character of the private houses.

Another feature noted by philostratos was that the houses were so connected that if one looked at them from outside they appeared to have one storey in it but if one went inside he would find the reality. There were underground rooms equal in length to the chambers above. This is true. The archæological finds have revealed that access to inner chambers was from the upperchamber. The reverse process misled the traveller who could not speculate whether it was a single

storied or a double storied building till he actually went inside to find out the real thing.

Thus philostratos' account, it seems, was confined to Sirkap alone where the Indo-Greeks had settled down. Sirsukh came into prominence in the time of the Kushans, specially in Kaniska's time, but as Apollonious made his travel in A. D. 43, it was not possible to give any description of Sirsukh which forms the third layer in the monuments at Taxila. Bhirmound, the earliest strata, was out of question since it was left in the 2nd century B. C., about 300 years before Apollonious toured. The walls of the city of Sirkap, which philostratos described in connection with the description of the temple, are still to be found. Since the temple lay north to the wall it was not inside the city proper. The city occupied the western spans of the hills of Hattia together with a well-defined plateau on the northernside. The plan of Taxila, as given by Sir John Marshall, shows that Jandial temple rested just on the skirt of the city of Sirkap.

Another point, worth noticing in connection with Philostrato's account, is his mention

of the metals which were so ingenously worked that the figures formed were comparable to the productions, of the most famous Greek artists. (Book II Chapter XX). This shows the ingenuity of Indian art which was unaffected by Hellenistic influences. Nearchus has pointed out that any object, which was presented to them, they could easily imitate. (Strabo XV. 1. 72). But they seem to have framed only the Indian deities and objects. The Indian objects were so garbed in Greek costumes that it was difficult for a visitor to discriminate whether it was a Greek object or an Indian one. The fact, that they were found in Hindu temples, was the only clue for discrimination. This shows the highest achievements of the Indians in the field of art. Their achievements in the field of speculation and in the filed of action were running on parallel lines.

There is no other Greek historian who cared to mention about Indian Art & Architecture. Megasthenes and Philostratos alone gave accounts of Pataliputra and Taxila respectively. The truth in their accounts is revealed by the archæological excavations conducted in those centres. Their Accounts

in the light of Modern discoveries are worthy of special treatment, and they from a subject by themselves. There is no account of Rajgir which flourished in the 6th Century B. C. It seems, that the capital being transferred to Pataliputra, it must have turned desolate when Megasthens arrived at the Indian court.

CONCLUSIONS

AN ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE INDIA.

The Greek account of India, though not exhaustive, is like a drop in the ocean, but still that drop does not lose its significance and the account throws sufficient light on Indian culture and civilisation in various aspects. The account developed with the evolution in the knowledge about India, and in each writer we find a little addition to the account of the previous writer, but the account, taken as a whole, shows that it covered all the aspects concerning Indian culture and civilisation. It may be that the previous historians, like Herodotus and Ktesias, depending on some second hand source, assumed that the Indians were barbarians, but even that assumption they applied only to those non-Arayans who were actually of that type. The rest of the account is that of the Indians who had attained a high degree of civilisation and indulged in some domestic industry and agriculture.

In her geographical aspect, India distinguished herself from the rest of the world as an

indisputable geographical unit but the history of India belied her geography. The forces of history were strong enough, and she had to succumb to the forces. Her splendid physical isolation was not able to shut out foreign influences upon her history.

Her political ideas, high as they were, did not fail to attract Greek attention. They were of the most advanced type. Indians had learnt the working of a monarchical and republican forms of government, and they knew well how to curtail the powers of a monarch inorder to make him more dependent upon the people. The king had to keep pace with his people both for his safety and tranquility. The Indians went further to assume a confederate spirit with a view to consider India as a political unit when there was some foreign question at issue. Thus politically India was much developed.

But this political development could only be possible when there was social order of the advanced type. A society of barbarians can hardly think of Democracy, Nationalism, Federation, or Confederation. It is only an organised society, that can entertain such

political ideas. The social order was orginally based according to the Hindu texts, but with the development of the economic life, there was a further elaboration and division, and society was divided henceforth into seven classes as pointed out by Megasthenes.

The economic life of the people was also well-advanced, and it was confined not to one particular branch, namely agriculture, but embraced multifarious forms of human endeavours such as agriculture, trade and industries, which goes to prove that Indian economic life was of an advanced type. People were not content to live an isolated and self-sufficient life but drew inspirations from the sterrings of life abroad. This highly developed economic life was manifested through the process of production, consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth. Even money and credit was in use, which shows that it was a fullfledged and developed economic life.

Her Religion and Philosophy, for which she is still famous in the west, did not fail to attract Greek attention; though it was not treated at greater length as the subject

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required but still the account, however small it is, indicates India's superiority in the field of speculation.

But her superiority in the field of speculation did not mean that Indians were lacking in the field of action, on the contrary the existing monuments, as described by the Greek historians, are sufficient to show India's superiority in the field of action also. "Even Susa and Ekbatana could not vie the beauty and grandeur of Pataliputra." Though the later development in monuments was more progressive, but even the description of the monuments at PataliPutra and Taxila are enough to show diligence and intelligence on the practical side of Indian life.

Thus India, as described by these Greek historians, was ancient and honourable, ancient in the sense that she is a very old country, and as Barrel, a great geologist, has pointed out "Man and the Himalayas arose simultaneously towards the end of the Miocene period over a million years ago", but she was honourable because of her institutions and ideas which were unsurpassable in the history of humanity.
